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[1899]

# HISTORIC BLENNERHASSETT ISLAND HOME

===== NEAR =====  
PARKERSBURG, W. VA.

## EXPEDITION AGAINST SPAIN

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By ALVARO F. GIBBENS, A. M.

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• FULLY ILLUSTRATED

PARKERSBURG  
GLOBE PRINTING & BINDING CO.  
1914

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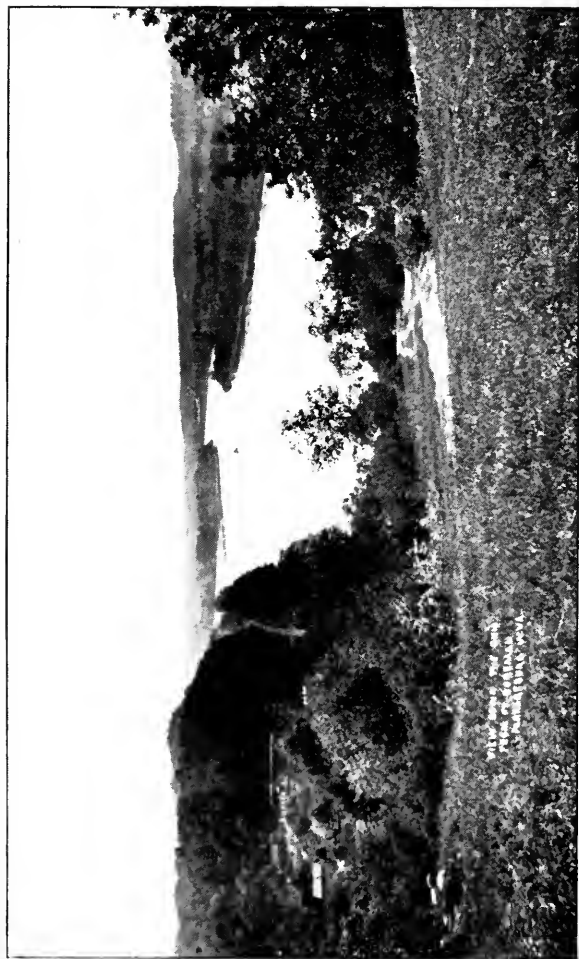


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View Down the Ohio



## VIEW OF THE ISLAND



THE most charming of all the ten islands on the Ohio river frontage, within the area of Wood county, was one destined to be historic in American events. It rested, ere the dawn of the century, like a gem of beauty on the fair bosom of the current, while the parting waters, golden at evening and radiant at morn, welcomed the kissing sunlight as it fell alike over surrounding hill and vale.

In the bend of a magnificent river, with the vinewreathed and willow-fringed stately trees, looking in kingly air, down upon its pebble-decorated sands in front, it was like a poetic dream of Nature disclosing itself to the eye of the traveler as he, on his exploring way southward and westward, passed reluctantly on.

Perhaps had every daring beholder, whose vision greeted this delightful scene, gone on his way toward the dominions of Spain with unfaltering oar strokes, there would have been no record in this volume of a great mystery and conspiracy, and the tranquility of a happy home and patriotic people would have been undisturbed. But a Napoleonic destiny barred the way to so happy a realization,

and Blennerhassett was the victim of his own ambition or the wiles of another whom the entire Nation had honored and trusted.

It is said that when Washington and his group of attendants in huge canoes made his land-inspection tour down the Ohio in 1770, he marked for entry in his own right this island. Doubtless he may have done so, but in the multitude of greater events, which crowded his country's sky the record was not made in the proper land office of Virginia, and his hatchet-claim lapsed.

A pioneer writer of history,\* asserts that Colonel P. Devoll located it, along with that tract above the mouth of the Muskingum, in his own name in 1774, and sold it to Elijah Backus, who gave the first name to the island as it was recorded in early navigation maps.

It appears to have been first surveyed in 1784, on a land warrant issued in 1780, and a patent made out by Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, 1786, to Alexander Nelson, of Richmond, who was a member of a mercantile firm in Philadelphia. By a bill in chancery of the High Court of Virginia, procured by Blennerhassett to perfect his title, it appears that Elijah Backus, of Norwich, Connecticut, bought of James Heron, of Norfolk, in the year 1792, two islands in the Ohio river, the principal one

\*Hildreth in "Original Contributions to the American Pioneer."



being that lying about two miles below the mouth of the Little Kanawha river, then in Monongalia county. The acreage was stated at 297 and the purchase consideration 250 pounds in Virginia currency, or about \$883.33.

Elijah Backus was a lawyer, editor of the Ohio Gazette and the Territorial and Virginia Herald, of Marietta, 7th December, 1801; elected to State Senate of Ohio in 1803, and removed to Pittsburg and there died in 1807 or 1808. He was once named by the Justices of Wood for membership in their court, but not having decided to locate on the Virginia side the commission was never made out.

In March, 1798, Harman Blennerhassett verbally agrees to purchase of Elijah Backus 170 acres of the upper portion for \$4500, and moved with wife and one child, soon after, upon it, using as his residence the old block-house about a half mile away from the upper end of the island, which building had been erected in the time of the Indian war by Captain James. Here he lived till the completion of his memorable mansion in 1800. In the primitive log-defense, afterwards, Daniel Fusher, who had landed on the island on New Year's day 1800; lived a few years, and then bought in Belpre. He was father of ten children. That building long ago suffered demolition.

At the period specified huge sycamores and other kingly forest trees guarded and graced the

head of the isle, and the wild-grape, trumpet-vine and creepers, thick and matted, interlaced the shores and touched the willows that encircled the wilderness isle on every side.

The island, or dual island, is narrow and long, extending miles from head to navigation's foot. The river on either side is so narrow as to permit the distinct hearing of ordinary conversation between island and main shore. From either bank, back of fertile meadows, rise picturesque hills, seemingly shutting in the island group from all the outer world.

## Harman Blennerhassett



IFTED, credulous, fated might be written as characteristic of this son of the Emerald Isle, who sought to make an Eden within the wilderness. He was the youngest son of a distinguished family, which could trace its lineage from the era of King John. His grand-father, Robert, having emigrated from Cumberland in the time of Elizabeth, became the head of three respectable branches of the Celtic gentry. He was not, as often asserted, of noble birth, though the family residence was Castle Conway, Ireland. Harman was born in 1767, while his parents were on a visit in Hampshire, England; so he was less than thirty years of age when he reached the shores of America. To his education his parents had devoted thoughtful care, and he graduated with marked honors, destined for the bar, and attained the degree of Barrister, but was not attracted to it for an occupation, and succeeding by the death of his elder brother to the family estates, he abandoned law as a profession. Nature had endowed him with more than moderate powers of mind to pursue investigations in natural sciences, and accordingly he delighted in these studies and

pursuits. It was claimed that so tenacious was his memory that he could repeat the whole of Homer's *Illiad* in the original Greek. In stature he was six feet tall, slender in proportions and inclined to stoop in his shoulders. His forehead was prominent above ordinary, and his nose was the distinguishing feature of his kindly face. In manners he was easy, courteous, social and interesting. In disposition he was obliging, charitable, indulgent and hospitable, bestowing his gifts upon the needy with cheerfulness and without ostentation. Being near-sighted he was compelled almost constantly to use spectacles. He was, nevertheless, passionately fond of gunning, but necessarily had with him his wife or a trusted servant, who levelled his fowling piece and brought it to bear upon the game when located. Peter, a colored servant, was sometimes stationed a short distance away and directed his aim as follows:\*

"Now bend, Master Blennerhassett, a little to the left. Now to the right. Up a point. There—steady—fire." Off would go the rifle, and not infrequently the frightened but unharmed game also.

He had a fine ear for music, and excelled as a performer upon several instruments, and was the author of creditable musical compositions. He was domestic in his habits, even to indolency, methodical in his plans and practice, ever studied to

\*"Hildreth's American Review," 1848, p. 50.



*Blennerhassett*



*His Wife.*



make his home cheerful, even to luxury, its inmates happy, and in the entertainment of friends both husband and wife were peerless and fascinating. In dress his style was English, contrasting with that of his plain neighbors and associates. At social gatherings invariably he appeared in satin waist coat, buff colored or scarlet knee-breeches, small silk stockings, silver buckled shoes and coat of blue velvet or broadcloth. At home his dress was more careless, in warm weather rather negligee, with-

His wife was Margaret Agnew, daughter of the out coat or waistcoat, and in Winter a thick woolen jacket or round-about.

Lieut-Governor of the Isle of Man, and granddaughter of the famous general of that name who fell at the battle of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and after her arrival in America she erected a monument to his memory.

While it is stated that he supplied himself with extensive literary and philosophical apparatus in London and embarked for New York in 1797, yet in his subsequent declaration, March 7, 1803, seeking citizenship, he made oath that he "had resided in the United States between the 29th of January, 1795, and 18th of June, 1798, and had then been in the State of Virginia one year."

He lingered in New York for awhile to study the people and the geography of the land he was to adopt as his own.

Over the rough, narrow paths of the Allegheny barriers, with his wife and child, he passed in the fall of 1797, and at Pittsburg embarked in a keel-boat down the Ohio, seeking a place for his castle. Landing at Marietta he spent the entire winter in a pleasant way among a refined citizenship, and prospecting by repeated excursions into the adjacent hills and vales for a site for his residence. He had almost decided to locate upon an eminence in the rear of the village, but the steepness of the approaches and the discovery in time of the captivating island in Virginia, below the Little Kanawha, decided his purchase and his destiny, and in March, 1798, out of a fortune of little less than \$100,000 he secured the main part of the island and fixed his abode.

The next two years was spent in supervising personally the erection of a palatial home, which he was ambitious should surpass any other private mansion west of the mountains, and in clearing the grounds of the dense timber and undergrowth, and in beautifying the approaches and lawns. To this accomplishment many hands were requisite, in addition to the contractors, house-carpenters and the laborers, the ten negro servants he had purchased as grooms, waiters and watermen. Forest trees, the growth of years innumerable were uprooted, boughs and trunks burned or conveyed away, and the inequalities of ground surface were smoothed



and changed in accordance with artistic taste. The giant trees, save here and there reserved ones, together with underbrush which might obstruct delightful view to the traveler descending Ohio's current, were removed from the broad front of the upper portion of the sand-pebbled gently-sloping head of the island. Elms, sycamores, and cottonwoods were sacrificed 'neath the strokes of the woodman's axe, that better, grander view might be had of the palatial mansion, which he had painted an alabaster whiteness.

Col. Joseph Barker, of Marietta, who, a few years after, in 1803, built a brigatine and named it *Dominic*, for Blennerhassett's oldest son, was the principal architect of this uniquely planned residence of costly beauty. An exterior view is given in the cut presented. Springing up at that era of primitive cabins, in almost a wilderness, which had just emerged from the perils of Indian warfare and the presence of ferocious game, it was like a creation of magic, a revelation of paradise in a "boundless contiguity of shade" and unadorned nature. The cost of the princely building, remote from the marts of industry and art, was, it is said, in excess of a half hundred thousand dollars. The exterior improvements of walks, lawns, shrubbery, orchards, flowers and clearing of an hundred acre farm below the structure, doubtless added ten thousand more, the entire expenditure of which

among farmers, mechanics and laborers was an appreciated benefit where money was scarce and opportunities to earn it few indeed.

No expense was spared in the construction and decoration, which might impart splendor, usefulness, or convenience. The main building fronted the east and was two stories high, 52 feet in length and 30 feet in width. Across the front a deep portico extended, and thence on either side in circular wings, single stories, 40 feet in length, connected the principal or center building with buildings on the north and south sides, each also facing the east, and being 26 feet in length and 20 feet in depth and two stories high. The entire structure formed half of an eclipse, with frontage of one hundred and four feet, exclusive of the circular porticoes, or promenade extensions. The right hand wing was used for library, philosophical apparatus, laboratory and study; the left appropriated to an occupancy by the servants. The united taste, culture and consultation of the Blennerhassett pair brought finishing, furnishing and furniture of every apartment in harmony and unison with a matured plan and ideal. The furniture, of the best, latest and richest, in every room, was brought from the East by wagon, through Pittsburgh, and thence down the Ohio by barge and keel, and was selected to please the eye and luxurious comfort and convenience to family and numerous guests.



The Castle in the Wilderness



The hall, a spacious room, was painted somber color, with cornice of plaster, bordered with moulding of gilt, extending around the lofty ceiling, with rich, heavy furniture to correspond. The drawing room contrasted with the hall in having furniture light in hue and structure, and elegant, with gay carpets, splendid mirrors, rich curtains, classic pictures and artistic ornaments. The side-boards—with decanters and wine glasses, indispensable to Virginia hospitality in early times—was graced, as were the tables, by a liberal supply of silverware. The finest taste in all the interior, as well as beauty of the exterior surroundings, indicated the refinement of owner and hostess, and the possession and enjoyment of the finest estate in the Virginia section of the Western world, compensated them partly for their absence and immigration from associates and heritage in the older land across the wide, wide sea.

Greeting the eyes in front of this mansion, which had been built of wood in view of safety in case of supposed earthquakes, was in process of brief time a graded lawn of several acres adorned with walks and dotted here and there with shrubbery and clusters of bright flowers and extending eastward to the rippling water's edge of the upper end of the island, with an opening in the reserved trees.

From the dwelling a gravelled carriage way and walks led through a vine ornamented gateway to

the river on the north side, where light boats were moored and slave attendants ready to ferry to the Ohio shore. This useful avenue was bordered with a thick hedge of native hawthorn. In the distance of this landscape picture were the forest trees and copse-wood, forming vistas for sunshine and storm to play in and delight the vision.

The space immediately in the rear and to the west of the ideal home was assigned for fruits and flowers of richest hue, and rare shrubbery in beds and gracefully curved walks. The wide area on the exterior border was circled by a picket fence, along whose line were planted peach, pear, quince and apricot trees, facing winding walks, over which floated in dewy morn, and sunlit noon, and dreamy eve, delicious odor of mingled and embowered honeysuckle, eglantine and similar flowering shrubs.

On the south was an extensive vegetable garden, and adjacent to it a thrifty orchard of apple, plum, cherry and similar fruits, in great variety.

The farm below, westward, was of alluvial soil, naturally rich and productive and kept improved and highly cultivated, yielding then as now in abundance wheat, corn and other grains, and its meadows were stocked with the best breeds of cattle and swine.

This estate upon a lovely island, when much labor and money had been expended upon it, and a few years of joyous possession had wafted by, was

indeed a rich dominion for cultivated minds, a picture of peace, repose, quietude, innocence and happiness.

Here in this mansion—almost a baronial castle when contrasted with its cabins, wilderness and pioneer neighbors, on both sides of the grand river—the rich Irish barrister and his accomplished wife and children, spent nearly six years of delightful existence. His retinue of employes and servants was large, and while the house was in process of erection and the improvements of lawns and farm progressing, afforded sustenance to many in those years of hardships and scarcity. His gardener, Peter Taylor, had been brought from England, Thomas Neale, a pioneer of Virginia, was long his dairyman and farm superintendent.

The self-exiled Blennerhassett, when seeking relaxation or change from his library, pictures, violincello and chemical laboratory, spent the hours in the village of Newport, on the Virginia shore, or at Belleville settlement, at Farmer's Castle in Belpre, or the Harmar fort, chatting socially with those congenial pioneers. When at social gatherings, he invariably appeared in the prescribed outfit of an English gentleman.

His wife, Lady Margaret, was properly the mistress of a refined home. Both were hospitable, fond of party and dance, and often broke the isolation of their water-encircled home by invitations to her

drawing room of the youth and beauty of the villages on both sides, she being the very center and magnet of an animated circle. She had been with scrupulous care brought up and educated in England by two maiden aunts, and was taught not only the languages and higher branches of a literary education, but initiated into the practical arts of housewifery and supervision as well. She could read and fluently converse in Italian and French, and was endowed in mind and manner and educated to grace with ease any position in the courts of Europe. In figure she was tall and well proportioned, impressive in appearance, graceful, yet dignified, with delicately moulded features, fair and almost transparent complexion, a swan-like neck, the feminine envy of that era, dark blue eyes of sparkling intelligence and radiant capability, abundant and glossy hair of rich brown hue. In dress her taste inclined to the showy and attractive, and she aimed to select and adapt her outfit to her well-shaped form.

She was passionately fond of outdoor exercise and recreation, rowing, riding and walking. Her step was elastic and graceful, whether passing among and caring for shrubbery and flowers or vaulting into the saddle of her favorite steed, or upon the waxed floor of the private ball room; in each she was enthusiastic and admired. In the saddle she was an expert equestrienne, and her favorite horse, Robin, in his bright trappings, seemed ever



proud of his mistress as both bounded swiftly along the forest road from the shore opposite the island to Marietta village or Fort Harmar and back again.

Often her cloth, scarlet riding robe, spangled with gold lace and glittering buttons and her flowing tresses waving beneath her ostrich-plumed hat, glimmered in the vine and leaf-tangled woods, as she fleetly rode along the river paths with her dusky, polite and faithful servant, Ransom, in the rear, spurring his charger to keep in sight of his charge, and only so doing when she checked her steed to await his coming. Like a fawn or fairy of sylvan creation she seemed to dart along her course beneath the green foliage, catching the inspiration of rosy health and elasticity. Her admirers boasted that as an athlete and pedestrienne she could clear a five-rail Virginia fence at a single bound.

It is said that a farmer's son of Belpre rented and cultivated a field of corn on the island, near the avenue leading from house to river, for the sole purpose of stealing a look at her beautiful person as she passed by on her way to ride or walk, as accustomed on a pleasant day.

Over the current she could guide or propel a boat, handling the oars with forceful skill, always having a sable attendant, generally Moses, the waterman, near in case of accident. She sometimes went in a canoe as far as Parkersburg, then New-

port, and even up the Kanawha to Beach Park, the home of the Hendersons.

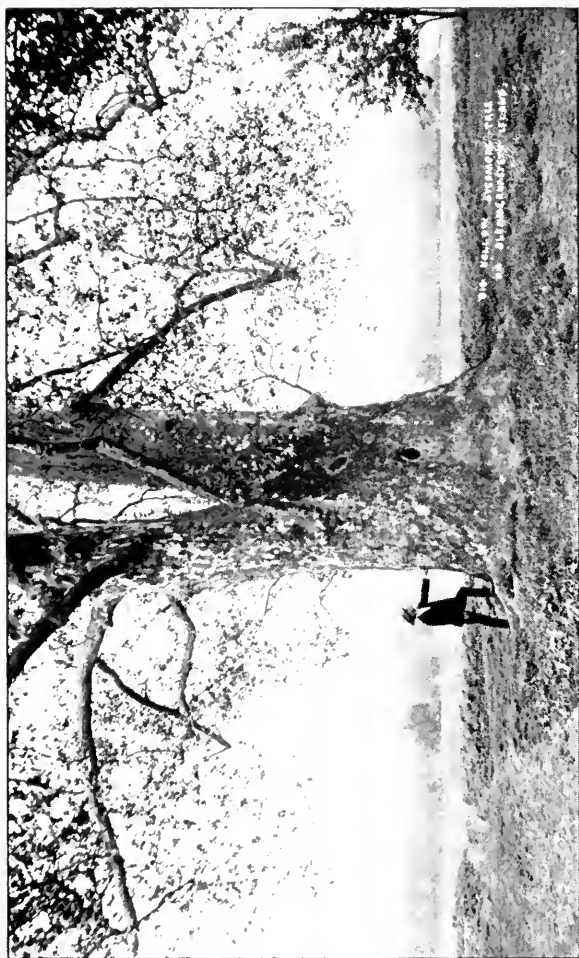
In the dance room she was peerless, her step light, her motion graceful, and with the rapidity and ease of thought winding airily through each call and figure, she was a favorite in each set.

\*"In conversation she was ready, versatile and engaging, being well-read in the general literature of her day, her conversational powers were great, showing clearness of perception and critically edifying. Her writings show a mind of deep sensibilities, in which the genius of thought gives finish and force to her sentences. There was a finish and beauty of experience interwoven with the subject on which she wrote, which created a corresponding sympathy in the mind of the reader." Elsewhere, as pertaining to sorrows of after days, is quoted one of her poems, indited while at Montreal, Canada, She wrote and subsequently published a volume entitled, "Widow of the Rock."

\*A friend of the family, with opportunity to traditionally know, states that "Mrs. Blennerhassett introduced vaccination in the West. During frequent visits to New York her children were vaccinated. She preserved the virus, invited parents to send their little ones to the island, and successfully

\*Pamphlet of S. C. Shaw.

\*Maria P. Woodbridge, in Lippincott's Magazine, of Feb. 1879.



Dr. Henry Henshaw, Tall  
up, Big (Henshaw, Tall)



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performed the operation. One of the children long recollected the beautiful Mrs. Blennerhassett. Admiration, love and respect and sympathy are felt for her as we follow her changing life from happy gait to lonely death in a New York garrett."

Edenic was the delightful home and domestic happiness, and quiet roseate surroundings of the Blennerhassett family, and such a portrayal of their appearance and character till the dawn of the year 1805.

# AARON BURR



N Newark, New Jersey, fifth November 1756, was born Aaron Burr, whose combination with the owner of the historic island, within the domain of our territory, brings his biography in brief into our volume at this point.

\*He entered Princeton College at 12 years of age and was graduated in 1772; studied theology with a clergyman in Connecticut; entered the Continental army in 1775; distinguished himself at Quebec, Monmouth, New Haven, and resigned, owing to ill health tenth March, 1779; studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1782; began practice at Albany, and in 1783 removed to New York; was a member of the State House of Representatives in 1784 and 1798; Attorney General of New York in 1789 and 1790; Commissioner of Revolutionary Claims in 1791; a Democratic U. S. Senator from New York, twenty-fourth Oct., 1791, to third March, 1797. At the Presidential election of 1801, Burr and Jefferson had each 73 electoral votes, and the House of Representatives on the thirtieth ballot chose Jefferson President and Burr, Vice-President. In 1804

\*From the Directory of Congress.



Aaron Burr and Daughter Theodosia

Carl Bianco



he was the Democratic candidate for Governor of New York and was defeated by Morgan Lewis by 8000 majority; mortally wounded Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken, July 12, 1804; after endeavoring to revolutionize the Mississippi Valley, he was arrested and brought to Richmond, where he was tried in August, 1807, on a charge of treason and acquitted; to escape persecution and his creditors, he went abroad in 1808, returning to New York City in 1812, he resumed law practice, and died on Staten island, at Port Richmond, Sept. 14, 1836.

About tenth April, 1805, seeking surcease from the poignancy of recent events, and perhaps with a determination to retrieve political heights and power by new evolution and schemes, in a vague way, he wandered West from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, and there arriving about the thirtieth, on a boat previously ordered and arranged for, he descended the Ohio river. The craft is thus described:

\*"His boat was a rude floating house, or ark, sixty feet long, fourteen feet wide, containing four apartments, a dining room, a kitchen with fire place and two bed rooms, all lighted by glass windows, and the whole covered by a roof, which served as a promenade deck. The cost of this commodious structure, to his astonishment, he found was only one hundred, thirty-three dollars. Of propelling power it had none, but merely floated down the swift

\*Parton's Life of Aaron Burr.

and winding stream, aided occasionally and kept clear of snags and sand banks by a dextrous use of the pole. In the Spring the current of the Ohio rushes along with surprising swiftness, carrying with it an ark or raft eight miles an hour. It would be a resistless torrent at that time but for its innumerable bends. Along the whole course hills, steep, picturesque and lofty, rise almost from the bed of the river and pour their streams headlong into it, whenever the rain falls or the snow melts. For hundreds and hundreds of miles this most monotonously beautiful of rivers winds and coils itself among those ever-varying seldom-receding hills, skirted by a narrow fringe of bottom land. Those hills, soon to be vine-clad, were then one forest; those bottoms, now smiling with farms, or disfigured by the shabbiest of towns and villages, were then destitute of inhabitants for hundreds of miles at a stretch.

He stopped briefly at Marietta on the fifth of May, to see the mounds and antiquities there, within sight of old Fort Harmar. Here the leading citizens called upon him to offer civilities and hospitalities, as to one who had been honored with the high office of Vice-President of the Union and had filled the chair so ably in the National Senate.

In the hours of his stay, doubtless, he had opportunity to hear of the elegant mansion, almost princely, of the Barrister and of its occupants, to

whom the Ohio Company's settlers were more than friendly, even attached, and to welcome suggestions to stop and view the estate.

Resuming his journey, as the eviednce appears, he next, a few hours later, could not pass the island without placing feet on the soil, and strolling over the grounds, in company with a Mrs. Shaw. Blennerhassett was absent, but upon invitation of his ever courteous wife, who observed the strangers and tendered the hospitalities of her home, entered and passed the hours in conversation 'till eleven o'clock, when Burr re-embarked and proceeded down the river, being impressed with the desirability of securing an auxiliary and friend in his absent host, the lord of the manor; and having deeply impressed his hostess with his fascinating powers, and the splendor of his official position.

Early in December Burr wrote a letter to Blennerhassett, in which he expressed his regret at not making his personal acquaintance when accidentally visiting the island, alluded cautiously to the talents of his absent host, as deserving wider fields and greater rewards, and indirectly stimulated him to action, and suggested plans to increase his fortune and attain a more exalted position of usefulness and honor.

To this adroit communication reply was made, admitting a desire to participate in any speculation

which might be presented, as, in Burr's opinion, worthy to engage his talents.

"I contemplated," says he in his Brief at the Richmond trial thereafter, "not only a commercial enterprise or land purchase, but a military adventure was distinctly mentioned in which I should engage." He conceived the country on the eve of a Spanish war, when it would be necessary to bring all the talents of the people into play, among which was Burr's, and under such considerations was willing to engage in any enterprise to subjugate the dominion of Spain, the prospective enemy of the Republic.

Other correspondence followed, and in August, 1806, with his accomplished and fascinating daughter, Thedosia, wife of Gov. Joseph Alston, of South Carolina, he visited a second time the island.

Father and daughter had embarked, with her infant son, at Pittsburg, and near the close of the month on their descent the voyagers reached Marietta. It was General Muster Day, and as an honored guest Burr interviewed the militia and put them through a few evolutions to the satisfaction of admiring spectators. In the eve they attended a ball and completely conquered all, he by courtly grace and manners, and Thedosia, by the magnetism of her beauty and the flash of her feminine witticisms.

This interview and stay at the island is graphi-

caly described in its effects by the eloquent William Wirt:

"A shrubbery, which Shenstone might have envied, blooms around him; music that might have charmed Calypso and her nymphs, is his; an extensive library spreads its treasures before him; a philosophical apparatus offers to him all the mysteries and secrets of nature; peace, tranquility and innocence shed their mingled delights around him; and, to crown the enchantment of the scene, a wife who is said to be lovely beyond her sex and graced with every accomplishment that can render it irresistible, has blessed him with her love and made him the father of her children. The evidence would convince you that this is only a faint picture of real life. In the midst of all this peace, this innocence, this tranquility, this feast of mind, this pure banquet of the heart, the destroyer comes. He comes to turn this paradise into a hell; yet the flowers do not wither at his approach, and no monitory shuddering, through the bosom of their unfortunate possessor, warns him of the ruin that is coming upon him. A stranger presents himself; introduced to their civilities by the high rank he had lately held in his country, he soon finds way to their hearts by the dignity and elegance of his demeanor, the light and beauty of his conversation and the seductive and fascinating power of his address. The conquest was not a difficult one. Innocence is ever simple

and credulous; conscious of no design itself, it expects none in others; every door and portal of the heart are thrown open and all who choose it, enter. Such was the state of Eden when the serpent entered its bowers. The prisoner in a more engaging form, winding himself into the open and unpracticed heart of Blennerhassett found but little difficulty in changing the native character of that heart and the object of its affections. By degrees he infuses into it the poison of his own ambition; he breathes into it the fire of his own courage; a daring and desperate thirst for glory; an ardor panting for all the storms and bustle and hurricane of life. In a short time the whole man is changed; and every object of his former delight is relinquished. No more he enjoys the tranquil scene; it has become flat and insipid to his taste. His books are abandoned; his retort and crucible thrown aside; his shrubbery blooms and breathes its fragrance upon the air in vain—he likes it not; his ear no longer drinks the melody of music—it longs for the trumpets clangour and the cannon's roar. Even the prattle of his babes, once so sweet, no longer affects him, and the angel smile of his wife, who hitherto touched his bosom with ecstasy so unspeakable, is now unfelt for and unseen. Greater objects have taken possession of his soul; his imagination has been dazzled by visions of diadems, and stars, and garters, and titles of nobility—he has been taught to

burn, with restless emulation, at the names of Cromwell, Caesar and Bonaparte."

Theodosia, with womanly tact, won her way, and with her father's desire for adventure and an imperial elevation, infused the same spirit and hopes into the heart of Margaret, and they were dreamers together, and constructed their castles while active preparations began in earnest for the fitting out of some mysterious expedition.

The month of September was full of activity, ardor and preparation for the great consumation of something yet not distinctly revealed. Burr and Blennerhassett proceeded to the counting house of Dudley, Woodbridge & Co., of Marietta, in which firm Blennerhassett was a partner, and ordered the building of boats and purchase of a quantity of provisions. The batteaux were to be 15, ten of which were to be 40 feet long and five of 50 feet length, and all 10 feet wide and 2 1-2 feet deep, and after the Schenectedy model, such as were in use on the Mohawk river. The conveyance capacity of this flotilla was to be 500 men. A separate keel-boat, 60 feet long was to be constructed for arms, ammunition and provisions. One of the larger boats was to be fitted up in better style for the family of the leaders. It was to have separate rooms, fire place and glass windows at the sides. The provisions were to cost \$2,000 and the boats a like sum.

The contract to build, at his boat-yard, seven

miles above the mouth of the Muskingum, was given to Col. Jos. Barker, who had erected the island mansion. They were to be delivered 9th December. The expedition provisions were to be pork, bacon, flour, kiln-dried meal, whiskey and smaller articles.

With definite understanding then Burr and his aid parted. During the period of absence Blennerhassett was intensely busy near his residence and old social haunts overseeing and urging forward the building of the boats, the purchase and storage of provisions, and drying in many kilns corn upon his island and soliciting recruits.

To some young men he stated the object was to settle Western lands; to others that the destination was Mexico, saying that undoubtedly there would arise war with Spain. He wrote a series of essays and published them in a Marietta paper over the signature "Querist," showing that the Western country would be advantaged by a separation from the Atlantic States. Such views, it must be admitted, were prevalent, largely in Kentucky and over the entire West, and were not considered treasonable. The essays were answered under the signature "Regulus," from the pen of Jared Mansfield, U. S. Surveyor, appointed by President Jefferson.

While these operations were going forward under the propulsion of Blennerhassett, Burr for recruits and perfection of general plans, went to



Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Kentucky and Nashville. At the latter town he contracted to build six boats, on the Cumberland, and deposited \$4,000 with General Jackson to pay for them. He also contracted to purchase 4,000 acres of land on the Washita, a branch of the Red river, for \$40,000, and paid thereon \$5,000. The settlement of a colony upon these lands was represented to be the sole object of the proposed expedition.

Then Comfort Taylor, of New York, was recruiting men and collecting supplies at Pittsburg, with which he was to embark upon several boats at that point and join the Blennerhassett fleet at the island. Daniel Floyd, of Indiana Territory, was similarly employed near the Falls of the Ohio, and was to connect with the fleet when it came down.

In October, Theodosia was joined by her husband, the Governor of South Carolina, who was drifting into the enterprise, and they with Blennerhassett left the island in charge of Margaret and visited Lexington, Kentucky.

The arrangement was to rendezvous November 1st; to leave the Ohio Falls by the 15th with 500 to 1,000 men; to be in Natchez, Miss., from the 5th to the middle of December to meet General Wilkinson.

In 1787, then a citizen of the Kentucky section of Virginia, Wilkinson had loaded a boat with flour and tobacco and descended the Ohio and Mississippi

rivers with the "ostensible purpose of making arrangements with the Spanish authorities by which to secure to the inhabitants of the upper country a free navigation of the Mississippi and a market for their produce."\*

In consequence of these semi-military and scarcely concealed operations and movements, rumors followed each other in rapid succession, on both sides of the river in the vicinity of the island.

Early in October, 1806, there was a mass meeting of citizens in Wood county, expressive of alarm for the safety of the country, by accumulating evidence of the complicity of Burr and Blennerhassett in a mysterious and many believed treasonable design. The cause of their apprehension proceeded from a partial revelation of the objects of the expedition, to some of his more intimate acquaintances, by Blennerhassett, and to whom also he had made a secret acknowledgment of the authorship of "Querist."

The public meeting, as appears from manuscript papers once held by a prominent lawyer and actor in the agitation of the popular mind, and now preserved by descendants of a pioneer family in Mason county, was united in its action and thoroughly patriotic in its motives and declarations. The proceedings read:

"At an assemblage of a number of citizens, at

\*Opinion 29 Oct. 1807

the Court House of Wood county, for the purpose of taking into consideration Burr's Expedition, Col. Hugh Phelps was appointed Chairman, and James G. Laidley, Secretary.

Among others present appeared Alexander Henderson, Peter Anderson, Robert Kincheloe, Thomas Tavenner, James Compton and many others.

The object of the call was briefly and succinctly stated by the chair to be to take steps to protect the honor and safety of the settlers and their property, and to cause every person friendly to the Constitution of the United States to express their attachment thereto. The situation was exceedingly alarming and instant action is incumbent. Hostility to peace and good order was being manifested, and it is for you, gentlemen of the new county, to determine a course of procedure.

On motion, it was, without dissent, resolved, that a committee be appointed to draft and to report forthwith resolutions expressive of strong disapprobation to the plan laid down by many ambitious characters, and that a volunteer company be raised to protect our county.

The chair selected Alexander Henderson, James Wilson, Jacob Beeson, Hugh Phelps, George Creel, Jr., John G. Henderson, Robert Kincheloe, James G. Laidley, Thomas Tavenner, Reece Woolf, William Beauchamp, George Creel and James H. Neal.

While the gentlemen selected were in council

discussing a course of action and framing proper wording, speeches were made by various persons present. Great diversity of opinion was had as to extent of guilt of those suspected, and the object of the movements on the island, yet there was unanimity as to necessity for a prompt and military course.

On return to the body of the court room, the following was reported by those delegated to advise, and without disagreement adopted as the views of every one present:

“Resolved, by the Committee appointed by the Citizens of Wood County, that met this 6th day of October, 1806, for the purpose of deliberating on the measures necessary to be adopted in this Alarming Crisis to Counteract what is supposed to be the ambitious and disorganizing views of Aaron Burr and his Parisans in this Western Country:

“I. That it is expedient that the Citizens of Wood County should without delay form themselves into a Volunteer corps or body of men, in order to train themselves to Arms and Military discipline for the purpose of Defending themselves and their property from any Threatened Attack and Repelling any Aggression that may be Attempted by any Insurgents inimical to the Interests of the United States, until some more effective measures can be adopted by the President of the United States. That to effect this laudable purpose, it is Recommended that six subscription papers be immediately drafted and handed around the County, in order to Procure Subscribers to the

same, enrolling themselves in the said Body. And that it is proper that a meeting should be held of the said persons enlisting themselves as aforesaid, at the Court House of Wood County, on the 11th day of this present month, for the purpose of Choosing by ballot Proper Officers to command the said Corps and adopt Proper rules and Regulations for their future Conduct.

“And that the Colonel of the 113th Regiment of Virginia Militia be requested to use the most effective means to collect the Public Arms of said Regiment and have them forthcoming at the Court House of this county on the 11th day of this present month; and also that the persons appointed to hand around the said Subscription papers should request the subscribers to their respective papers to volunteer in bringing forward any private arms they may be in possession of at the said time.

“Resolved, that Alexander Henderson, Peter Anderson, Robert Kincheloe, Thomas Tavenner, James Compton and James G. Laidley are proper persons to be appointed to hand around the said Subscription papers.

“Resolved, that a Copy of the Proceedings of this Committee be forwarded to the Printer of the Ohio and Monongalia Gazettes, to be printed in their respective newspapers, and that a printed Copy of said Proceedings be forwarded with as much expedition as possible to the Executive of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the President of the United States.

Resolved, that a Permanent Committee of five persons be appointed to Regulate the proceedings necessary to be pursued during the existence of danger, and that said Committee or a majority of

them should meet whenever an emergency may seem to them to require it; and that the said Committee be empowered to call meetings of the citizens of Wood County; and that Col. H. Phelps, Robert Kincheloe, Jacob Beeson, Alexander Henderson and George Creel, Jr., are considered as fit persons to compose said Committee.

"Resolved, that it is incumbent a permanent Secretary should be appointed to said committee, and that James Wilson is a fit person for that purpose.

"Resolved, that the foregoing resolutions are founded on a firm attachment to the Constitution of the United States, and adopted in support of the Liberties guaranteed to us by the same, submitting ourselves always to the Constituted authorities."

### **VOLUNTEER ENROLLMENT.**

Pursuant to Resolutions submitted to the consideration of Sundry Citizens of Wood County on the 6th day of October, 1806, and adopted, it is considered that the alarming situation of existing affairs in this Western Country render it immediately and essentially necessary for every true friend to his country, in support of that Constitution and of that Government for which our fore-fathers have bled, and having gained under which themselves and their children have so long happily lived, to adopt measures of defense against the views of any ambitious and disorganizing Demagogues inimical to the interests of the same; for which purpose the Citizens of Wood County, in conformity

thereto, are expected to come forward upon this occasion by subscribing their names to this paper to form themselves into a Volunteer independent Corps, to effect said purposes, until some more effective steps for our safety can be taken by the President of the United States of America.

Robert Kincheloe,	William D. Bayley,
William Prince,	Edward McPherson,
Hubbard Prince,	Lawrence King,
John Johnson,	Levi Barton,
Peter McCaul,	Thomas Thornton,
Samuel Allen,	John Caplinger,
John Gibbins,	Daniel Brown,
John Carpenter,	Willis Owens,
James Melrose,	William Gillaspie,
William Hill,	William Dixon,
Nimrod Saunders,	Francis Tierney,
David Creel,	Elijah McDonale,
Henry Thornton,	William Melrose,
Henry Gillaspie,	James Beaby,
Thomas Creel,	Robert Page,
Elijah Phelps,	Henry Lord,
Geo. Ruble,	James Lord,
Leonard Caplinger,	Jeptha Kincheloe,
James Dutton,	Alexander Creel,
Richard Lee,	Joseph King,
Bennett Williams,	John Gillaspie,
John G. Henderson,	
Robert Wells,	Jeremiah Brown,
W. Minor,	James Ringlesby,
Robert Shanklin,	Jorisha Smawler,
Richard Arnold,	Joseph Johnson,
David Rawson,	
Charles Murphey,	Thomas Tavenner,

Benniah Badgeley,  
 Thomas Leachman,  
 Adam Ruble,  
 Polser Ruble,  
 Philip Harter,  
 Christopher Coonrod,  
 John Badgeley,  
 Robert Edelen,  
 Harrison Sursons,  
 John Spurlock,  
 Elijah Rockhole,  
 Walter Coe,  
 Geo. Dunlevy,  
 Jedra Darby,  
 Thos. Gilrason,  
 Peter Jett,  
 William Langfitt,  
 William Dyar,  
 James Cunningham,

Peter Hannaman,  
 John V. Browne,  
 James Gibson,  
 James Ward,  
 John Pugh,  
 Charles Paw,  
 John Drake,  
 Asahel Wilkinson,  
 E. McFarlane,  
 George Jacobson,  
 Joel Woolf,  
 Peter McCall,  
 John Carpenter,  
 Samuel Coe,  
 John T. Langfitt,  
 William Sinclair,  
 Andrew F. Dyar,  
 John Coe,  
 John Barns,

Z. Bockorees,

James Gillespie,  
 James Melrose, Jr.,  
 Robert Triplett,  
 Thomas Thornton,  
 Sylvester Ward, Jr.,  
 Rezin Barnes,  
 John Owens,  
 Jacob Beeson,  
 George Creel,  
 Daniel Rowell,  
 John Stephenson,  
 James G. Laidley,  
 Thomas James,  
 Hugh Phelps,  
 Wm. Weedon,

Reece Woolf,  
 John Neal,  
 James Wilson,  
 J. C. Griffin,  
 Joseph Cook,  
 Joseph Spencer,  
 Timothy Darling,  
 Elijah Moss,  
 James Foley, Jr.,  
 Moses Pilcher,  
 Andrew Davidson,  
 William Enoch,  
 James H. Neal,  
 Walker Turner,  
 Elias Gates,



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Yates S. Cornwell,	Chas. Rockhold,
Allen Davis,	Jacob Trumbo,
Nehemiah Lewis,	Jacob Shry,
Henry Woodyard,	John James,
Jesse Woodyard,	Bennett Cook,
J. A. Murdough,	Edward Coe,
Tunis Dils,	Elias Barnes,
Philip Dils,	Elijah Barnes,
Peter Dils,	Elias Davis,
Stephen N. Wilson,	William Davis,
Walter Coe,	Elias Hickman,
William Eaton,	Martin Bailey,
Baley Rice,	James Davis,
John Trevin,	Shepherd Conwell,
Thomas Dye,	Edward Gambrill,
James Henderson,	Lewis Gregory,
John Dils,	Thomas Fais,
Henry Dils,	Alexander Henderson,
John Heany,	of Alex'r,
Francis Langfitt,	David Owl,
Robert Barnes,	Frederick Cradlebaugh,
George Creel, Jr.,	Jacob Owl,
J. G. Henderson,	Isaac Smalley.

Mrs. Blennerhassett, hearing of the meeting at Newport, and being informed that a battalion of three companies, under command of Col. Hugh Phelps, were then mustering at the Point, intending to make descent that eve to burn the mansion and seize the Kiln-dried corn, despatched Peter Taylor to Kentucky to inform her husband of the danger which menaced him and his property.

"On his way home he called on Dr. Bennett, of Mason County, to get more information and pro-

cure aid in case of attack, and protested the innocence of his designs."

He then wrote as follows:\*

WOOD COUNTY, 3 NOV. 1806.

COLONEL PHELPS:

Dear Sir—Just returned home after a journey of seven hundred miles. I hasten to express to you the satisfaction with which I learned, on the road, that you had been invested with the command of the two volunteer companies that had been raised in the county during my absence, as that circumstance afforded me a sure guarantee against the idle reports I had heard of any misguided violence intended by my neighbors, against my family or property, while I was not on the ground to defend them.

But the information my wife has given me of the purport of the friendly message, (of protection, &c.,) you sent me, at a time when you thought it would be expedient, has laid me under personal obligations to you, and rendered it a duty with me to endeavor to revive our former neighborly intercourse, especially at a season when so much misconception misleads the people, propagated, as I have no doubt I can satisfy you, by your enemies and their own, when I shall have the pleasure of an hour's unreserved conversation with you, in which I expect I can make you some proposition that will engage your attention and be serviceable to your best interests. I therefore embrace the earliest opportunity of soliciting an interview with you, and, in consideration of my fatigue, I take the

\*Safford's Blennerhassett papers. p. 149.

liberty of requesting to see you this evening, and accept a bed with us, or if that should be inconvenient to you, I shall do myself the pleasure of attending any appointment you may designate for tomorrow.

I am, dear sir, your obliged and obedient servant,

HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT.

**REPLY.**

NEWPORT, NOV. 6, 1806.

HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT,

Dear Sir: From circumstances of business, it was out of my power to attend at Col. Cushing's so early as my appointment. A short time after you left there I went over and found a note requesting me to wait upon you this day. I am sorry that from similar circumstances, I shall not be able to comply; but if you should be at home, I shall do myself the pleasure to wait upon you tomorrow.

Your Obt. Serv't,

HUGH PHELPS.

Col. Phelps, having visited Blennerhassett according to appointment, the latter thanked him for informing his wife of rumors afloat, and the measures adopted to meet the designs of himself and associates. He affected, however, to ridicule reports heard of the injuries threatened his family, and suggested that he suspected the other party in the country, under the influence of the Hendersons, was becoming so strong that its leaders would probably

overturn the Colonel's interest, on which they had hitherto depended for whatever popularity they had acquired, and cautioned the Colonel against any coalition or co-operation they might seek with him, in existing clamor or suspicion against the views or intentions of Aaron Burr, or his friends, which the past conduct of the Hendersons toward him should induce him to avoid.

Col. Phelps, in reply, complained much of the ill treatment he had received from the Hendersons.

Blennerhassett stated his concern with Aaron Burr in the land purchase; that he solicited or invited no person to join in the emigration, though many had voluntarily offered to do so; but added that if the Colonel wished a concern for himself or his friends, he might look to the example of General Jackson and others of distinction, who, Blennerhassett understood were going to join in the settlement with many associates; that as to rumors, &c., circulated of Colonel Burr, or his friends, accusing them of engaging in anything against the laws of the United States, such were wholly groundless; but that it was not unlikely that the proximity of the purchase to the country where an engagement had already taken place, or might soon be expected between General Wilkinson and the Spaniards, would engage Colonel Burr and his friends in some of the early adventures of the war; General Jackson having already prepared to march with one thousand or

fifteen hundred of his Tennessee Militia, whenever he should think himself authorized by the orders and wishes of the Government to put that body in motion.

Colonel Phelps received the information by declining to embark himself, on account of his family and the unsettled state of his affairs, but said that he had no doubt many young men of Wood county would be glad to go with Blennerhassett, to whom he would recommend the speculation as he might have opportunities."

Soon after this episode Burr joined Blennerhassett for a conference as to plans and their execution, and soon left.

From the vicinity of Newport, at the mouth of the Little Kanawha, and on both sides of the Ohio, where the commotion was becoming alarming, and approval or censure directed upon the movement as each believed it patriotic and justifiable or otherwise, reports went to Washington, to Richmond and to Ohio's Capital at Chillicothe. Based upon these, perhaps, the President sent a confidential agent, John Graham, Secretary of Orleans Territory, west to discover and reveal the situation. Arriving at Marietta about the middle of November, he met and interviewed along with others, Blennerhassett, who, upon being questioned, was impressed that he was conversing with a confederate and disclosed all he knew as to Burr's plans. Graham undeceived him,

stated the character of such an expedition to be objectionable and might be a violation of law and treaties, and endeavored in vain to persuade Blennerhassett to withdraw.

Thence information was sought at Newport and Belpre, and Graham thereafter went to Chillicothe, where the Ohio Legislature was in session, and held interviews with its leaders and the Executive. Governor Tiffin presented the situation by message. The Legislature considered the subject with closed doors, and passed an act to enable the Executive to suppress or defeat the alleged reprehensible scheme and expedition. Under this authority the Militia of the adjacent townships were ordered out under the command of Major Generall Buell, with instructions to seize the flotilla built upon the Muskingum, and stores collected at Marietta, and all boats of suspicious character descending the river.

On the 27th of November, 1806, President Jefferson issued his pronunciamiento, alleging "that unlawful enterprises were on foot in the Western States, having for their object a military expedition against the dominion of Spain, that for this purpose sundry citizens of the United States were fitting out and arming vessels in the Western waters, collecting provisions, arms and military stores, and seducing honest and well meaning citizens, under various pretenses, to participate in said criminal enterprises, warning all persons engaged therein to withdraw

from the same without delay, as they will answer the same at their peril and incur prosecution with all the rigors of the law; and commanding all officers, civil and military, to use their utmost exertions to bring the offending persons to punishment. Neither the name of Burr nor accomplices were mentioned.

On the 7th of December Comfort Tyler and Israel Taylor, from Beaver, Pennsylvania, arrived on the island with 4 boats and about 32 men, and at that point all was confusion and expectation.

Blennerhassett addressed and sent by special envoy the following note to the boat contractor:

Wood County, Dec. 9, 1805.

Col. Barker:

Dear Sir—I have immediate occasion for so many of the boats as are caulked and paid. I wish you therefore to forward them by Capt. Elliott and Mr. Dean to this place without waiting a moment for their covers, which we intend to finish ourselves, or on the way with the assistance of Col. Tyler's men and our own. You will forward, however, such of the materials as are got ready for completing the coverings, and make out your bill accordingly. For such of the boats as I cannot have here by tomorrow morning, Mr. D. Woodbridge and myself will make such arrangements as will be agreeable to you. You perceive I wish you to drop working on my family boat, which however I wish you afterwards to get ready in the most comfortable manner, for my wife and children—of

whom some of my friends will take charge to follow on with the utmost expedition.

I am, Dear Sir, Yours, &c.,

HARMAN BLANNERHASSETT.

To Col. Barker by Mr. Jas. Dean.

In anticipation of the departure of the flotilla, he addressed another letter to his friend and counselor, James Wilson, to be presented by his wife subsequently:

December 10, 1806

Dear Sir—As circumstances render it improbable you can soon hear from me, I request you to lend the earliest attention to the completing of a proper inventory of all the effects I leave here, and also to the recording of the deed I entrusted to your care, which I think should be accompanied with an affidavit stating that it was delivered to you to be recorded the last December court which was not done for want of a court. I rely upon your honor and friendship in this and every other particular relating to much of my interest as you have professionally taken charge of.

I have amicably settled my difference with D. Woodbridge, just as he will explain to you. My other business I trust in your care will be lucrative though not I flatter myself to the extent of better service I sincerely believe I shall hereafter be able to render you.

With hearty good wishes for your prosperity and the happiness of your family, I am, dear Wilson,

Your sincere friend,

HARMAN BLANNERHASSETT.



Of the fifteen boats contracted for on the Muskingum, only eleven were completed, and it was intended to deliver them on the tenth, but the day before they were seized by a detachment of six or eight of the militia, with all the provisions stored at Marietta.

Nearly all the recruits had been attracted to the enterprise under an impression that its character was untainted by disloyalty, indeed favored by the National Government, and that they might have to fight, only in case of war with Spain, but the activity of State authorities and the military seizure convinced them of their error, and Blennerhassett found himself deserted by the substantial portion of those he had pledged to the expedition, and, doubtless, but for the ambition, pride and intervention of his wife, would have also abandoned it. Some of the younger men were not so ready to desert the cause. At the fireside of a neighbor in Belpre, a party assembled, and decided by strategy and force in the darkness of the night to liberate the boats then in custody of the authorities on the Muskingum. As they were in the act of untying the boats a sentinel observed their purpose and sounded the alarm. Nevertheless, persisting in their efforts, a struggle ensued without arms, for possession of the boats as they drifted out toward the center of the stream. By this time all but one were retaken by the militia,

and in this captured one the ardent youth returned down the Ohio to their homes.

The Buell militia are thus facetiously described by Judge W. H. Safford in his well written volume.

"A warlike array of undisciplined militia, with cannon, necessary equipage and arms, stationed themselves along the banks of the river, to cut off the forces expected from above. Many amusing jokes were played off at the expense of the raw recruits during this campaign; such as setting an empty tar barrel on fire and placing it in an old boat or raft of logs, to float by in the darkness of the night. The sentinels, after duly hailing and receiving no answer, would fire a shot to enforce their command; but still dread silence reigned, and calmly the phantom vessel, with her solid crew, floated onward and downward, in utter recklessness as if the crowing of a farmhouse cock only had disturbed the night's silence. Irritated at such manifest contempt of their high authority, they plunged into the stream to seize the boat and capture its luckless navigators; when 'confusion utterly confounded,' naught appeared but the remains of a log or barrel, which some laughter loving wag had freighted for their mischance and his amusement.

"On another occasion, they had learned that Tyler and his men had passed down the river as far as Blennerhassett's island, from whence he was expected to return, to recapture the boats and pro-

visions. To cut off all possible communication with Marietta, where the boats were tied, particular instructions were given in the evening to bring away all the water-crafts from the lower side of the Muskingum. Several sailors, who boarded on the opposite shore, considered the opportunity for sport too favorable to pass unimproved. The plan first proposed for the accomplishment of this end, was to raise an armed party, with blank cartridges, and fire at the sentinels. Upon strict search, however, they found that all the muskets, blunderbusses, rifles and shotguns had been previously appropriated by the militia. The cannon was then thought of, when this, also, it was ascertained, had been called to the aid of the State authorities. Determined not to be defeated, in the laugh they had promised themselves, they resorted to the expedient of emptying a half-keg of powder into a canvas sack, wrapping it closely with twine. This they deposited under ground, care being taken to leave a communication with the contents by means of a priming-hole and slow match. At midnight, when all, save the faithful and lonely sentinels, were enjoying that repose so necessary to the wearied soldier, after a destructive attack

“On whiskey and peach-brandy,”

a confused and foreboding sound, from the opposite shore, grated unmusically on the ear of the guards. Although appearances were somewhat ominous, yet

they concluded not to disturb the slumber of their brothers in arms until a more satisfactory demonstration had been made. For this opportunity they were not kept long in suspense. Suddenly the earth began to heave and throe, as if drunk with the heel-taps of the soldiers' glasses, and following in quick succession, a report that many mistook for the summoning trump of the end of time. The scene which succeeded is more easily imagined than described. Those less confused, did indeed, take time to adjust their outside garments, but much the greater number started with nothing but their nether vestments, without regard to uniform or military parade. Here stood one, vainly struggling to thrust his feet through the armholes and sleeves of his linsey warmus, while, at his side a companion had drawn his pants over his shoulders, illustrating most ludicrously, but literally, the lines of doggerel:

"Put on his shirt outside his coat,  
And tied his breeches round his throat."

"Shivering in the cold winds of December, they hurried in hot haste to the tanta-ran-ta of the trumpeter, and rub-a-dub-dub of the drum major general. Whether any had taken the precaution to load or prime is a question which time and reflection have never settled. The major, who was a tailor, is said to have charged the cannon with his goose—the State having made no provision for ammunition. The deputy, as he mounted his horse,

was heard to say that, As great men were scarce, he thought it best to flee from danger.' Had Tyler and his men been the real cause of their alarm, he would have doubtless met with a stern resistance, but, fortunately for him, he was unconsciously asleep on the island."

Soon after the mooring of Tyler's boats at the island landing, the Wood county militia were being assembled to carry out the President's proclamatory orders and avert the expedition. The island party had information that the companies from Newport were to descend on them on the morrow. So in haste they prepared to depart that night. All was activity, and every recruit was in motion to run bullets, load the boats, and gather the still adhering ones. It was a chill night in fierce December, and the snow had fallen several inches deep.

\*Pearly Howe, who had been employed to make forty boat poles for the flotilla, on the evening of the 10th of December, went to deliver them on the Ohio side landing. On signaling over, a flat was sent to receive them. On the boat, two young men, recruits, were acting as sentinels, each armed with a rifle. No persons, unless known, were allowed to pass from the Ohio shore to the island. One of the guards laid down his rifle in the bow, while the other sat, with his gun across his thighs, ready for action.

Simon Pool, about dusk, under the authority of

\*Evidence as witness on the trial.

the Ohio Governor, went to the water's edge, his utmost limit of jurisdiction, opposite the island landing, hoping to find a chance to apprehend Blennerhassett on Ohio soil, but was not permitted to pass beyond the sands of his State.

There was a regular pass words for crossing the channel. Some one of the island would ask to the hailing boat, "What boat?" If the answer was "Ise boat," the craft was unfastened and sent over. A watchword was also used on the Ohio side.

With forty or more men in four boats and a smaller one added by Blennerhassett, and a liberal stock of provisions, five rifles, three pair of pistols, one blunderbus, and all the outfit they had secured, Blennerhassett and his assistant directors lifted moorings and passed out upon the stream into the night.

The island was left almost in loneliness, with Mrs. Blennerhassett and her two sons, Dominick and Harman, Jr., and a few servants; who were all to follow in a few days in the special boat yet on the Muskingum.

With the dawn of the morrow the Wood county militia were astir, and in a few hours appeared at the deserted isle, with Hugh Phelps, their stalwart Colonel, in command of the two companies. Too late; the anticipated game had flown. Leaving a small party of men in charge of the premises, the commander, with the remainder of his volunteers,

promptly marched down on the Virginia shore, across the great bend, to intercept the fugitives at Point Pelasant. The direct distance by land being less than one-half that by water, the military arrived at Kanawha's mouth many hours before the boats. Colonel Phelps stationed his men on the bank of the Ohio with strict injunctions to watch all night. The air was raw, the surroundings uncomfortable; the villagers sociable and providing, the whiskey flask was frequently circulated, overcoming tired limbs, **and thoughts** of duty and discipline, the watchers got ingloriously drunk and soundly slept, the Tyler flotilla in the night's obscurity, glided by and pursued its way unhailed and unmolested, and by day-dawn was too far on its course to be overtaken. In similar way it passed toward its destination, uniting at the Falls, on the 16th, with Floyd's boats, and ten days later joined Burr at the mouth of the Cumberland, and on the 29th passed Fort Massae, notwithstanding orders had been given by State Governors for its arrest.

At the island, before the arrival of the militia, Mrs. Blennerhassett had mounted her charger, Robin, and was on her way to obtain the family boat at Marietta and follow the expedition. In this she failed and on her return home found a deplorable condition existing.

Several days previous to the flotilla's departure from the island, a party of fourteen young men, late

students fresh from academy, with Morgan Neville and William Robinson, Jr., sons of influential and rich parents, widely and favorably known, adventurous and hoping to join the expedition to the Spanish dominions, embarked in a flat boat at Pittsburg for the purpose. When nearly opposite the mouth of the Little Kanawha, their boat was, during the night, driven ashore by the wind and ice, and the next day they were all arrested by the militia forces at Newport, and in their own craft escorted to the island to await the return and pleasure of Colonel Phelps, then still absent at Point Pleasant. The young men, restless under their captivity and disappointment in not connecting with the Blennerhassett flotilla, in their humor and chagrin, ridiculed their captors in homespun, and threatened legal retaliation for their arrest and detention. Such impertinence became unbearable to the guards, and Justices of the Peace were sent for to Newport. Reece Wolfe and Daniel Kincheloe responded, and in one of the richly furnished apartments of the island mansion the trial was conducted. The young men, with ability and humorous adroitness, pleaded their own cause, and nothing of a positive or unpatriotic character being produced, they were released.

During this rather comical examination, and the absence of the Colonel, who was a soldier and a



gentleman, a spirit of license and devastation took possession of the militiamen left in charge.

\*First of all, the men broke into the wine cellar, and there drank themselves into vandals. Then they ranged the house, destroying or disfiguring wherever they went; firing rifle balls through painted ceilings, tearing down costly drapery, and dashing to pieces mirrors and vases. Then they rushed, like so many savages, about the grounds, destroying the shrubbery and breaking down trellises and arbors. The ornamental fences were torn away, piecemeal to make fires for the sentinels at night. In the midst of this riot and destruction Mrs. Blennerhassett returned; but the embarrassments of her situation, and her anxiety for the success of the expedition were such that she surveyed the ruins of her abode with indifference."

In this dilemma the young men who had been recently relieved of captivity, prepared to continue their journey, and, with sincere sympathy and courtesy, offered her and her helpless children an apartment in their boat.

At this juncture the Colonel arrived from his tour of fruitless attempt to check the flotilla. He witnessed with inward mortification and anger, the wanton destruction of the premises, and the evidences of revelry and ruin by his men, during his compulsory absence, and turning upon them, with

\*Parton's Life of Aaron Burr, page 437.

withering look and stern voice, he exclaimed, \*  
"Shame! Shame! Shame on such conduct! You have disgraced your district and the cause in which you are concerned."

Courteously then and kindly he met the released strangers, acceded to their wishes and that of their invited guest for the voyage, aided her in preparation for departure, and expressed to Mrs. Blennerhassett sorrow for the rudeness shown so recently, assured her of what she already knew, that were he present the vandalism would not have happened.

Next morning, 17th of December, with the assistance of the Colonel, as well as the young men, needed furniture, part of the library, trunks and provisions were put aboard another boat, that of A. W. Putman of Belpre—who also assisted in departure—lashed alongside, sadly, with shattered dreams, the Blennerhassetts, wife and boys, bade adieu to a once blissful abode, and the boats sped on their way.

Early in January the family was reunited at Bayou Pierre on the Mississippi.

Neither the purpose of our local history or allotted space in the volume, will permit a detail of events in the unhappy destiny or subsequent lives of the alleged conspirators.

Briefly, the expedition was a failure; arrests followed the leaders, and both Brur and Blennerhassett were indicted at Richmond, Virginia, in the

\*Judge Safford's Blennerhassett Papers.

U. S. Circuit Court before Chief Justice Marshall, each on two charges, one for treason, the other for misdemeanor.

Burr was arrested on the Tombigbee river, in Washington county, Alabama, conducted to Fort Stoddart, was a prisoner there three weeks, and then, on horseback with guard of 9 men, under command of Perkins, started to Washington City. On the way President Jefferson dispatched at Fredericksburg a conveyance to Richmond, Va. Blennerhassett was arrested, tried and acquitted at Natchez by the Territorial authorities, who censured, as did the sympathizing people, Jefferson and the Administration, for their fear and misconception.

\*"After this discharge from custody he located his family at Natchez, Mississippi, and in June following left that place on horse, to return to his island, and look after his affairs. When he reached Lexington, Ky., he was arrested for treason, and under guard conveyed to Richmond. Others of Burr's confederates who had means returned to the Eastern States, and forgot their dream of glory in the pursuit of civil life. Others remained in the Territory, supplying it with school teachers, music teachers, and dancing masters. These events, narrated in the papers of the day, drew the attention of thousands to the Western States from the east as emigrants."

"So great effect had this alleged Burr conspiracy upon the U. S. that in 1818 it carried the National Road over the Alleghany barriers to bridge a possible chasm to sever the Mississippi from the Union. Hence to meet this rival line, Virginia, 27 Feb. 1827, gave authority to construct a road from Winchester over the mountains to the Ohio river."\*\*

So exceedingly bitter had become public opinion and so suspicious the multitude toward all who had not displayed animosity in conduct and speech against the expeditionist, that even friendly counsel was attacked and motives misconstrued. The Virginia Gazette, copying from the Aurora, declared:

"We are authorized to state from unquestionable authority that James Wilson, who was Secretary of the Wood County meeting last Fall, has been arrested as one of Burr's adherents, was examined before the magistrates, and found guilty."

Such statement was an error in fact. Warrant was issued, but by orders from Richmond, withdrawn. The attempt, however, thus to reflect upon the patriotism of a sensitive nature, so wrought upon the accused that he eventually migrated from the county, and settled in the Great Kanawha Valley.

Blennerhassett, learning of this episode, in his Port Gibson retreat, on the 25th of March, 1807, mailed the following letter, which was received in

the slow process of postal transportation, on 11th of June.

Natchez, March 11, 1807.

My Dear Sir—I hear first by Mrs. Blennerhassett of the embarrassment you underwent fr. the sagacity of yr. patriotic neighbors, who charged you with a participation in my crimes. Whatever inconvenience you have suffered on that account, my imagination has not failed to magnify, in proportion, as my best services will never be wanting in my endeavors to indemnify you for it.

Some particulars from you on this subject fr. you I feel much interest and anxiety to learn. I will now forbear to engage you further in this line, than to beg of you to refer my present sentiments to some future works that may verify their sincerity.

As you are probably curious to know something of my destiny and future prospects—I can inform you of the first, that the issue of my trial fixed here for May next, will constitute a small portion of the sand or mortar with which the monument now rising to the glory of Mr. Jefferson or the Constitution is to be cemented. Mr. Graham is to be the master-mason on that part of the work to be raised in this part of the country; with what address he will handle his tools is yet uncertain. Only amidst the jar of convictions and acquittals that will reach your ears, you will distinguish with your usual discernment the traverses of those lines of liberty and slavery of private honors and public duty that characterize the high minded administration of this free country and its happy constitution.

As for Col. Burr—he may sink or raise above

his enemies, but he has forfeited no recognizance in spite of all the proclamations that can be issued by Government or Governors. I am almost tempted to inclose you Gen. Williams advertisement of his horse Diomede.

My future prospects embrace the occupation of a Cotton Planter, as the surest and easiest means of retrieving my shattered resources. Not that I have been mistaken in my belief that the practice of the law, would succeed well, but I have feared that to insure success some practice in intrigues must be united with a knowledge of law. As to yourself, therefore, if you could stoop somewhat to the former, as I know you are gifted in the latter, I should not hesitate to say to you, move immediately hither. You will be independent in 3 years; wealthy in 6. Think of this. You shall hear further from me more particularly as to the field here and in N. Orleans, when the weather is fairer and I can better advise you of the harvest you might make there, than at present.

My situation here, as it precludes at present the means of my returning to the Island to collect the property there, so it will probably determine me ultimately against residing there again. I am now embarrassed by the want of my negroes, horses and household furniture which I have entrusted Col. Cushing to forward to me in the best manner he can, with a statement of the amount of sales he has effected. In this I request you to assist him, and inform me of the general state of all the business I left in your care, with every other concern of mine I am sure you will not disregard, because it was unnoticed to you. I particularly hope you have adjusted my account with Capt.

Thomas Neale, &c. &c. I am persuaded you have not omitted to concern yourself with Col. Cushing, of the amount or value of the salable property you know I intended for sale. It is of importance to note everything down as soon as possible, and every article kept dry, and the horses, &c, that you could induce any purchaser to buy the rest—be gladly received here together with all the cash that can be forwarded. I write also to Doctor Wallace and Capt. Neale by the opportunity of Miss. Boat and Dana returning to Belpre, to whom I refer you for further news, &c. I have to request you to assist Mr. Biggs to collect and bring along any of my effects he may take up at the Island on his way to this place.

Mrs. B. retains with me the most friendly regards for Mrs. Wilson and yourself. I entreat you to write to me as soon and after as you can, and remember you can always command, dear Wilson, the last services of

Your devoted friend,

HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT.

# THE TRIAL AT RICHMOND



HIS celebrated case was docketed for a trial to begin 30th of March, 1807, but numerous delays ensued. It was in the United States Court for the Fifth Circuit of the Virginia District, presided over by the distinguished Chief Justice John Marshall, with Cyrus Griffin as associate.

The Grand Jury for which twenty-four freeholders were summoned and sixteen constituted, on the 24th of June brought in indictments against both Burr and Blennerhassett, and one against each for "treason," and another for a "misdemeanor," levying war against the United States, at Blennerhassett Island, time December 10, 1806.

John Randolph, Foreman, presented on information of Peter Taylor, William Eaton, John G. Henderson, Jacob Allbright, D. Woodbridge, Jr., Edmund B. Dana, Alexander Henderson, Hugh Phelps, and others. General Andrew Jackson was also a witness.

Next day presentments were made against Jonathan Dayton, Ex-Senator from New York; Comfort Tyler and Israel Smith of same state; John Smith, Ex-Senator from Ohio; and David



Floyd of the Indian Territory, naming the place as Blennerhassett Island, and the time as December 13, 1806.

On June 26 forty-eight jurors, twelve at least to be from Wood county, were ordered to be summoned. That day the prisoner, Burr, was removed from the goal to the front room of the house of Luther Martin, used for a dining room. To secure it, shutters with bars, and the door with bar and padlock were provided, and seven men as guards on the floor of an adjoining unfinished house.

The jurors from Wood appeared, and were: Hezekiah Bukey, Jacob Beeson, William Prince, James G. Laidley, James Henderson, Nimrod Saunders, James Compton, Thomas Creel, Anthony Buckner, Hamilton Morrison, Yates S. Conwell and David Creel.

Among numerous witnesses for the prosecution over a broad territory, were: Hugh Allen, Simeon Poole, Edward B. Dana, Lewis Kerr, Jacob Jackson, John Blair, Alexander Rollston, Alexander Henderson, John G. Henderson, Hugh Phelps, Return J. Meig, Tunis Dils, Maurice P. Bellnap, Charles Duval, James Taylor, Bennett Cook, and Hezekiah Lewis, Peter Taylor, gardener, Jacob Allbright laborer, Dudley Woodbridge, Jr., John Dana, Morgan Neville, Waldo Putnam and William Love, groom.

Of all summoned as petit jurors, from Wood

county, not one was admitted to the panel, each one having so expressed his views of the case as to be barred out.

In court Burr appeared with scrupulously neat attire, in black, with powdered hair and queue, in manner dignified, composed, polite, impressive, and hopeful, never under any provocation losing his temper, nor giving personal retort. He guided his assistant counsel, brought forward nearly every motion on his own side, and clearly and briefly stated the grounds therefor. Blennerhassett was as neatly and carefully attired, but less buoyant in spirits, and only could await the result of the trial of his principal's case.

The assisting counsel were: Edmund Randolph, an old-school gentlemen; John Wickham, an Englishman of bearing, eloquence and logic, of fine presence and persuasive manner; Luther Martin, one of the most noted lawyers of Maryland; Benjamin Botts, father of John Minor, young, ready, dashy, and a caricaturist in word painting; Charles Lee, once United States Attorney General; and unique "Jack Baker," a lame man, a merry fellow, with horse wit, but no lawyer or speaker, the humorist of the group. All these counsellors tendered their services gratuitously to Colonel Burr; Wickham and Botts did likewise to Blennerhassett.

In selecting a panel the record states, beginning with the first, Hezekiah Bukey:

Botts. We challenge you for cause. Have you ever formed an opinion about the guilt of Col. Burr?

Bukey. I have not sir, since I have been subpoenaed.

Ques. Had you before?

Ans. I had formed one before in my own mind.

Here Hay, the prosecutor, stated, he did not believe there was a single man in the State, qualified to become a jurymen, who had not in some form or other made up and declared an opinion on the conduct of the prisoner.

Botts. Have you said Col. Burr was guilty of treason?

Bukey. No. I only declared that the man who acted as Col. Burr was said to have done, deserved to be hung.

Ques. Did you believe that Col. Burr was that man?

Ans. I did, from what I had heard.

Wirt. Did I understand you to say that you concluded upon certain rumors that you had heard, that Col. Burr deserved to be hung?

Bukey. I did.

Ques. Did you believe these rumors?

Ans. I did.

Ques. Would you, if you were a jurymen, form your opinion upon the question whether an

overt act of treason had been committed at Blennerhassett Island, from the rumors heard?

Ans. It was upon other rumors, and not upon that, that I had formed an opinion,

Martin submitted it to the court, whether he could be considered an impartial jurymen.

The court decided that he ought not to be so considered, and he was accordingly rejected.

James G. Laidley stated that he had formed and expressed some opinions unfavorable to Colonel Burr, that he could not pretend to decide upon the charges in the indictment, which he had not heard; that he had principally taken his own opinion from newspaper statements; and that he had not, so far as he recollected, expressed an opinion that Colonel Burr deserved hanging, but that his impression was that he was guilty. He was therefore rejected.

James Compton being challenged for cause and sworn, stated that he had formed and expressed an opinion from hearsay, that Colonel Burr was guilty of treason, and of that particular treason of which he stood charged, as far as he understood. He was rejected.

Mr. Burr observed that as gentlemen on the part of the prosecution had expressed a willingness to have an impartial jury, they could not refuse that any jurymen should state all his objections to himself; and that he had no doubt, in spite of the

contrary assertions which had been made, that they could get a jury from the panel.

Hamilton Morrison, upon being called, said that he had frequently thought and declared that Colonel Burr was guilty, if the statements which he had heard were true; that he did not know whether they were so, but only thought from the great clamor which had been made that it might be possible that he had not passed any positive opinion; nor was he certain that he had always qualified it by saying: "If these things were true;" that he does not recollect to have said, that Colonel Burr ought to be punished, without stating at the same time, "If he were guilty." Mr. Morrison was suspended for further examination.

Yates S. Conwell had formed and expressed an opinion, from the reports he had heard, that Colonel Burr must be guilty of high treason. He was accordingly set aside.

Jacob Beeson declared that he had for some time past formed an opinion, as well from newspaper publication as from boats which had been built on the Ohio, that Colonel Burr was guilty; and that he himself had borne arms to suppress this insurrection. He was therefore set aside as incompetent.

William Prince declared he had nearly the same impression as Mr. Beeson; that he, too, had borne arms; as well on Blennerhassett's Island as

on descending the river in search of Blennerhassett. He was set aside in like manner.

Nimrod Saunders declared, that he had expressed an opinion previously to his being summoned on the jury, that the prisoner had been guilty of treason. He was therefore set aside as incompetent.

Thomas Creel had no declaration to make, and was challenged for cause. Upon being interrogated, he stated that he had never asserted that the prisoner ought to be punished; that he had said, that he was a sensible man; and if there was any hole left, he would creep out of it; that he had conceived that Colonel Burr had seduced Blennerhassett into some acts that were not right; that he had never positively said that Colonel Burr was guilty; that he had said that Blennerhassett was the most blamable, because he was in good circumstances, and well off in life; whereas Colonel Burr's situation was desperate, and that he had little to lose; that he had not said, that Colonel Burr directly misled Mr. Blennerhassett, but through the medium of Mrs. Blennerhassett; in short, that there was no determinate impression on his mind respecting the guilt of the prisoner.

The Chief Justice did not think that this was sufficient to set him aside, and suspended his case for further examination.

Anthony Buckner had frequently said that the

prisoner deserved to be hung. He was therefore set aside.\*

David Creel had formed an opinion from the statement in the newspapers, and if these were true, the prisoner was certainly guilty. He had expressed a belief that he was guilty of the charges now brought against him, and that he ought to be hanged. He was therefore rejected.

Subsequently, 11th of August, James Henderson, of Wood County, who was absent yesterday, was called. He was challenged for cause. On being examined by Mr. Botts, he admitted that he

\*The pamphlet, "Biography of the Buckner Family" gives this fuller version of the examination of Col. Anthony Buckner.

"He had been as most of his comrades upon the same occasion, and his associates near the island-home of the Irish Barrister, who was also accused, open in his denunciation of Conspirator Burr, and indignant at the stupid acquiescence and aid given by his friend Blennerhassett. Upon being interrogated in court as to any expression of guilt or innocence in the pending case, replied that, "He had frequently declared the opinion that any man who did as it was said the prisoner had acted, should be hung."

He was further asked: "Did you not say you would give five pounds for Colonel Burr's head? Looking keenly at the prisoner, he replied, "Yes, by G—d, and I'll do it yet."

The silence for a moment was painful. You might have heard a pin drop. As he poured out these emphatic but not very elegant or courteous words, his piercing black eyes, that seem to look through one, flashed fire upon the marbleized face of the distinguished defendant, but no order of contempt was therefor issued against him.

He and his son-in-law, George Creel, Jr., had the night before going to the island, sat up during all its December hours moulding bullets for the volunteer militia.

was not a freeholder; and was subsequently set aside.

Mr. Hamilton Harris was the next of the suspended jurymen who was called. He declared that it was with pain he should serve on the jury; that he did not wish to serve on it; that it was still more disagreeable to him, as the defendant seemed to have such imaginary thoughts against him; that he had not meddled with the prisoner's transactions, though perhaps he might have done so, had it been profitable to him. James Henderson and Mr. Neale were both examined as to what they might have heard him say on the subject, and both declared that they had heard him say nothing material.

Mr. Burr—Have not these rumors excited a prejudice in your mind against me?

Ans. I have no prejudice for or against you.

Mr. Botts. Are you a freeholder?

Ans. I have two patents of land.

Ques. Are you worth three hundred dollars?

Ans. Yes; I have a horse here that is worth the half of it.

Ques. Have you another at home to make up the other half?

Ans. Yes; four of them. (Here the court said that sufficient cause had not been shown against his being a proper juror.) I am surprised why they should be in so much terror of me. Per-



haps my name may be a terror, for my first name is Hamilton.

Colonel Burr then observed that that remark was a sufficient cause for objecting to him, and challenged him. Mr. Morrison was therefore set aside.

This was the first peremptory challenge which the prisoner made, of the thirty-five to which the law entitles him.

Thomas Creel, another of the suspended jurymen from Wood county, was next set aside by the court, because, he said, that he had both formed and expressed sentiments unfavorable to the prisoner.

None from the county of Wood but had so expressed opinions as to afford cause for rejection, so the jury had to be made up entirely from citizens distant from the place of alleged treason.

### THE WITNESSES.

The official reports of the trial and other sources available this century after the event; do not furnish interesting incidents of narration of any value. They seem to indicate that the evidence of a conspiracy was not abundant in the locality of the island.

In substance, Peter Taylor, the gardener, said, that he had been with Blennerhassett three years; in October, 1806, his employer had inquired for young men who had rifles, were orderly, and could

conform to discipline; that in this inquiry he stated that Colonel Burr had 80,000 acres of land in the southwest, and wanted young men to settle upon it; that he would give any such one who would go down the river, plenty of grog and victuals while going down the stream, and three months provisions after they had got to the end; and that every one enlisting must have his own rifle and blanket to bring with him.

Jacob Allbright, a Dutchman laborer, said that he was hired to build a kiln for drying corn on the island; after the grain was dried it was sent to mill; that he was four weeks on the island in that business; that the snow was two or three inches deep when the Beaver boats landed at the pier; that Blennerhassett paid off in Kentucky notes, not very good to circulate; that he went over to the bank at Kanawha to change them; that he saw one or more moulding bullets in the kitchen; that he assisted in carrying to the boats four or five trunks on the night of the departure.

William Love, the groom of Blennerhassett, alleged that it was a very cold night the hour the boats left the island, raining and freezing; that Blennerhassett's clothes were put into the boat he was to occupy; that Dudley Woodbridge slept on the island that night.

It was also shown that the boats left the shore Wednesday night of the 13th of December; that

there were only four of them, and about thirty men therein; that on the island when preparing to embark, some packed meat on board and some carried other things; that they untied about one o'clock at night; that there was one sick one left on the island. That Nahm Bennett was sent before day to pass Gallipolis, with two horses, to connect with the flotilla; that Burr had been on the island not later than six weeks before the boats left shore; that depositions for the trial were taken before John G. Jackson; that the party had left at that hour in the night because the Kanawha militia were expected down very early next morning; that a half bushel of candles and some brandy were taken into the boats; that the party held a council at the foot of the pier, and all left together; that they only intended to defend in case of attack by the expected mob, was the drift of declarations heard.

During the examination of witnesses, as well as in arguments thereon and thereafter, the eminent counsel on both sides displayed enthusiasm, legal learning, tact and forensic and poetic oratory. The press as well as the bar were impressed with the importance of the issues involved, and the attention of the people, from ocean to ocean and river border to southern gulf, was thoroughly engrossed. It was the only topic each day near the scene of the initial acts of the alleged conspiracy. In Wood county it was looked upon from both political and

personal standpoints. By some, Jefferson, the President, was blamed as being too ardent, suspicious and partisanly vindictive without occasion, and by others his course was not only justified but commended, and the object of the attempted enterprise believed to have been unpatriotic and dangerous to civic liberty. Blennerhassett, however, with few exceptions, was considered deceived as to the nature and end of the expedition, and the sympathies of his admirers and neighbors went out strongly towards him in his financial and legal embarrassment and the serious accusations against him. Even Burr had among many west of the Alleghenies sincere devotees, and numerous sons of unrelated families near the close of that era bear his name as their own distinctive appellation.

Late in September Burr was discharged on the main indictment in the United States Court, and the one for treason against Blennerhassett, though a bond of \$5,000 was given, with Dudley Woodbridge as security, was never prosecuted.

Judge Marshall ended the "misdemeanor" trial by stating:

"I shall commit Burr and Blennerhassett for preparing and providing means for a military expedition against the territories of a foreign prince with whom the United States is at peace. If those whose province and duty it is to prosecute offenders against the United States shall not be of opinion that a crime of deeper dye has been committed, it

is at their choice to act in conformity with that opinion.

"If Burr is sent to Kentucky, Blennerhassett cannot be, because he has provided no means for an expedition but in the District of Ohio."

They were ordered committed to Ohio, and admitted to bail in the sum of \$3,000 each; Luther Martin and Dr. Cummings became sureties for Burr, and Dr. Cummings and Israel Smith for Blennerhassett.

Both were in custody for long months, and as the act was one, the grade of leadership and guilt different but interlaced, the acquittal of Burr ended the prosecution, and virtually set both expeditionists free again, but left them wrecked in fortune and influence, and the ardor of their energies and ambition dampened.

## DESOLATION and ENDING



WITHIN one year from leaving the island, Blennerhassett returned to find it desolate, his property seized for debt, many articles, among which was Robin a favorite horse, stolen, slaves sold or escaped, and house gutted of its contents. The prospect was in no wise encouraging, and it is not to be wondered that his naturally timid heart almost failed him.

The boats fitted up on the Muskingum had been modified for transports to carry United States troops from Marietta to St. Louis. Under orders of the President, the meal and one hundred barrels of pork stored for the expedition, had been sold and the funds appropriated. Ransom Read, the best slave, for a debt of thirty-five dollars and costs, had been cried off at a public sale.

Negligence of tenants, river freshets, and the rudeness of those in charge who viewed it as public property, had rendered the building and surroundings pitiable to behold. Window casings had been torn out to procure the leaden weights by which the sashes were poised. The stone roller used to level his lawn and grounds, was broken to obtain the iron axles on which it ran. Hemp and cordage

machinery took the place of flowers and shrubbery.

He sadly looked upon the ruins of his once bright home, and returned to Natchez, purchased a plantation of 1000 acres, at St. Catherine, near Port Gibson, Claiborne county, Mississippi, on it placed twenty-two slaves, and there, upon about two hundred acres of it, began the culture of cotton. The war with Great Britain, in 1812-15, occasioned an embargo and reduction in values, and the enterprise was abandoned. He sold the plant for \$27,000 which scarcely satisfied his creditors.

The Blennerhassetts spent ten years on their cotton plantation, enjoying the society of a few choice friends. Harman, however, seemed to have dropped hope and muscular energy. During this period another son and a daughter were added to the home circle. Lady Margaret, with her characteristic industry rose at early dawn, mounted her horse, and rode over the grounds, examining each field, and giving directions to the overseer as to the work to be done that day, or any alteration to be made in the plans, which circumstances required.

He removed to New York, and attempted the practice of law. Not succeeding, he went to Canada in 1819, and there also failed in his purposes. Then he visited Ireland, his native heath, to prosecute a reversionary claim, but was barred by statute of limitations. During this absence of her husband, Mrs. Blennerhassett found a home in New

York, and was financially assisted by the Emmetts. She went then to Pennsylvania, where at Wilksbarre, her sister, Mrs. Dow, resided. She next joined her husband in Montreal, and while there, in 1824, wrote for publication a volume entitled, "Widow of the Rock and Other Poems." Among the productions of her pen while in Canada was the pathetic one named:

### THE DESERTED ISLE.

Likt mournful echo, from the silent tomb,  
That pines away upon the midnight air,  
Whilst the pale moon breaks out, with fitful gloom;  
Fond memory turns with sad, but welcome care,  
To scenes of desolation and despair;  
Once bright with all that beauty could bestow,  
That peace could shed, or youthful fancy know.

To the fair isle, reverts the pleasing dream;  
Again thou risest, in thy green attire,  
Fresh, as at first; thy blooming graces seem:—  
Thy groves, thy fields, their wonted sweets respire;  
Again thou'rt all my heart could e'er desire.  
Oh! Why, dear isle, are thou not still my own?  
Thy charms could then for all my griefs atone.

The stranger that descends Ohio's stream,  
Charmed with the beauteous prospects that arise,  
Marks the soft isles that, 'neath the glittering beam,  
Dance with the wave and mingle with the skies;  
Sees, also, one that now in ruin lies,  
Which erst, like fairy queen, towered o'er the rest,  
In every native charm, by culture dressed.

There rose the seat, where once, in pride of life,  
My eye could mark the queenly river's flow,  
In summer's calmness, or in winter's strife,  
Swollen with rains, or battling with the snow.  
Never, again, my heart such joy shall know.





View of Alouette  
dam from east



Havoc and ruin, rampant war, have passed  
Over that isle, with their destroying blast.

The black'ning fire has swept throughout her halls,  
The winds fly whistling o'er them, and the wave  
No more, in spring floods, o'er the sand beach crawls,  
But furious drowns in one o'erwhelming grave,  
Thy hallow'd haunts it watered as a slave.  
Drive on, destructive flood! and ne'er again,  
On that devoted isle let man remain.

Too many blissful moments there I've known;  
Too many hopes have there met their decay;  
Too many feelings now forever gone,  
To wish that thou could'st e'er again display  
The joyful coloring of thy prime array:  
Buried with thee, let them remain a blot,  
With thee, their sweets, their bitterness forgot.

And, oh! that I could wholly wipe away  
The memory of the ills that worked thy fall;  
The memory of that all-eventful day,  
When I returned, and found my own fair hall  
Held by the infuriate populace in thrall;  
My own fireside blockaded by a band  
That once found food and shelter of my hand.

My children (oh! a mother's pangs forbear;  
Nor strike again that arrow to my soul;)   
Clasping the ruffians in suppliant prayer;  
To free their mother from unjust control,  
While with false crimes and imprecations foul,  
The wretched, vilest refuse of the earth,  
Mock jurisdiction held around my hearth.

Sweet isle! methinks I see thy bosom torn;  
Again behold the ruthless rabble throng,  
That wrought destruction taste must ever mourn.  
Alas! I see thee now—shall see thee long;  
But ne'er shall bitter feelings urge the wrong,  
That to a mob, would give the censure, due  
To those that arm'd the plunder-greedy crew.

Thy shores are warmed by bounteous suns in vain,  
Columbia!—if spite and envy spring,  
To blot the beauty of mild nature's reign:  
The European stranger, who would fling,  
O'er tangled woods, refinement's polishing,  
May find, expended every plan of taste,  
His works by ruffians rendered doubly waste.

After a brief stay the family embarked for Bath, England, to reside with his maiden sister at Cottage Crescent. Thence for health they went to St. Aubin, on the Isle of Jersey, to be with his sister Avis. Thence they removed to Port Prerie, upon the Island of Guernsey, where February 1, 1831, on the bosom of his devoted Margaret, whom thirty-four years before he had married, he passed away, within requiem murmur of the never ceasing waves.

In 1842 his widow visited the United States to seek relief from the government, which had prosecuted relentlessly and almost inexcusably despoiled. She asked damages for acts of the Virginia militia, in a statement made out by Dudley & Woodbridge, who well could estimate its extent.

She also petitioned for relief sought in the following words:

“Your memorialist does not desire to exaggerate the conduct of the said armed men, or the injuries done by them; but she can truly say, that before their visit, the residence of her family had been noted for its elegance and high state of improvement, and that they left it in a state of com-

parative ruin and waste; and as instance of the mischievous and destructive spirit which appeared to govern them, she would mention that while they occupied as a guard-room one of the best apartments in the house (the building of which had cost nearly forty thousand dollars), a musket or rifle ball was deliberately fired into the ceiling, by which it was much defaced and injured, and that they wantonly destroyed many pieces of valuable furniture. She would also state, that being apparently under no subordination, they indulged in continual drunkenness and riot, offering many indignities to your memorialist, and treating her domestics with violence.

Your memorialist further represents, that these outrages were committed upon an unoffending and defenceless family in the absence of their natural protector, your memorialists' husband being then away from home; and that in answer to such remonstrances as she ventured to make against the consumption, waste and destruction of his property, she was told by those who assumed to have the command, that they held the property for the United States, by order of the President, and were privileged to use it, and should use it, as they pleased. It is with pain that you memorialist reverts to events, which, in their consequences, have reduced a once happy family from affluence and comfort to comparative want and wretchedness; which blighted the prospect of her children, and made herself, in the decline of life, a wanderer on the face of the earth."

With this petition is filed also the following:

"On the 13th day of December, 1806, the boat in which we were, was driven ashore, by ice and wind, on Backus Island, about one mile below Mr. Blennerhassett's house; we landed in the forenoon, and the wind continuing unfavorable, did not afford us any opportunity of putting off until after three o'clock in the evening, at which time we were attacked by about twenty-five men, well armed, who rushed upon us suddenly, and we, not being in a situation to resist the fury of a mob, surrendered; a strong guard was placed in the boat to prevent, we presume, those persons of our party who remained in the boat, from going off with her, while we were taken to the house of Mr. Blennerhassett. On our arrival at the house we found it filled with militia; another party of them were engaged in making fires, around the house, of rails dragged from the fences of Mr. Blennerhassett. At this time Mrs. Blennerhassett was from home. When she returned, about an hour after, she remonstrated against this outrage on the property, but without effect; the officers declared that while they were on the island the property absolutely belonged to them. We were informed, by themselves that their force consisted of forty men the first night; and on the third day it was increased to eighty. The officers were constantly issuing the whiskey and meat, which had been laid up for the use of the family, and whenever any complaint was made by the friends of Mrs. Blennerhassett, they invariably asserted that everything on the farm was their own property. There appeared to us to be no kind of subordination among the men; the large room they occupied on the first floor presented a continued

scene of riot and drunkenness; the furniture appeared ruined by the bayonets; and one of the men fired his gun against the ceiling; the ball made a large hole, which completely spoiled the beauty of the room. They insisted that the servants should wait upon them, before attending to their mistress; when this was refused, they seized upon the kitchen and drove the negroes into the wash house. We were detained from Saturday evening until Tuesday morning, during which time they were never less than thirty, and frequently from seventy to eighty men living in this riotous manner entirely on provisions of Mrs. Blennerhassett. When we left the island, a cornfield near the house, in which the corn was still remaining, was filled with cattle, the fences having been pulled down to make fires. This we pledge ourselves to **a true statement** of those transactions, as impression was made on us at the time.

MORGAN NEVILLE,  
WM. ROBINSON, JR.

Henry Clay, with sincerity and ardor, urged its passage before the proper committee, but while pending therein, she died, worn out and mortified with toil and privation, attended only by her son Harman, and Mary, a black servant, who, her former slave, would not desert her even in the depths. This negroes remained faithful with Harman, the son, till his death, and subsequently was burned to death.

Mrs. Blennerhassett was a member of the Episcopal church, and buried by their beautiful

ritual, in the family vault of Thomas Addis Emmett, the friend of other days. At the funeral were both Robert Emmett, the father and his son. Watched during her illness by her devoted Harman, and the faithful Mary, she sank peacefully to rest. The "Marble Cemetery" of repose is a small, plain enclosure on Second street in New York, with no shrubbery or flowers, but strewn with vaults, amid the rush of a busy world around.

Of their children, it may be said:

1. Dominick, born in 1799, the eldest son was dissipated. In 1822 he sailed for Savannah; in 1823 he enlisted as surgeon-mate, drank heavily and was discharged. In New York he turned up destitute, and by intervention of friends of his fathers was made assistant apothecary in a hospital. Subsequently he lost his position and went to St. Louis Mo.

2. Harman, Jr., born in 1801, was an invalid, became a portrait painter, succeeded poorly, and was eventually taken to the alms house on Blackwell's island, Nov. 10, 1854, and there in his illness was attended by the family servant and the ladies of the "Old Brewery Mission." He died August 18th of that year, and was buried beside his mother.

3. Joseph Lewis, the youngest, moved to Missouri, where he married and practiced law, in Troy, Lincoln county; was an officer in the Confederacy,



and died soon after the close of the war, and left descendants in St. Louis.

The other children, daughters, died with fever in Mississippi.

Theodosia Alston, the fascinating child of the gifted conspirator, with her maid and physician, Dec. 30, 1812, set sail from Charleston, on the Carolina coast, in a small schooner, the "Patriot," to go to her father in New York. The vessel was noted for her sailing qualities, was commanded by an experienced captain, had a pilot of skill and courage, and was expected to make the voyage within six days.

Neither vessel, crew or passengers were ever heard of afterwards, and their fate is still locked up in the arcana of the great ocean. Burr, who idolized his daughter, as she did him, ever after the sad event declared himself "severed from the human race."

The mansion and premises passed into the hands of a Kentucky creditor, who began the culture of hemp and manufacture of cordage thereon. In those days it was a profitable industry all along the water courses. The wings of the dwelling were the places of its storage and caused the destruction of the already wrecked castle of buried hopes and dreams of empire. The servants returned one night from a merry-making, or frolic, on the adjacent shore, and in the river crossing their

skiff was upset, and one of their number was drowned, and the rest submerged. On hastening to the cellar for brandy to restore the unfortunate and drive the chill from themselves, they passed through the entrance to the hemp room to which the stair-way led, too near the hemp, and the flare of the candle ignited the fibres, and the flames almost instantly were beyond control, and in less than an hour only ashes and debris remained of the once lovely mansion of the Barrister prince. In night's darkness, dazed with the effects of their carelessness, the servants neglected to awaken the sleepers in the main rooms, who would have perished had not one accidentally awakened in time to alarm the others. Their escape was made with no robes but their thin night dress, and a few articles of furniture only were saved.

Today there is little to remind the curious visitor of the happiness and splendor of 100 years ago.

\*"The Ohio and Virginia hills, the beautiful river, and the blue sky are the only things which look in the least as they must have looked to the original inhabitants."

Before leaving the island with the flotilla Blennerhassett had rented to Col. Nathaniel Cushing, a friend in Belpre, the entire estate, crops, cattle and agricultural utensils. He kept possession for two years, and it was then by creditors suits, taken out

of his hands by the courts, and furniture and library under an attachment sold at auction for bills endorsed by him for Burr.

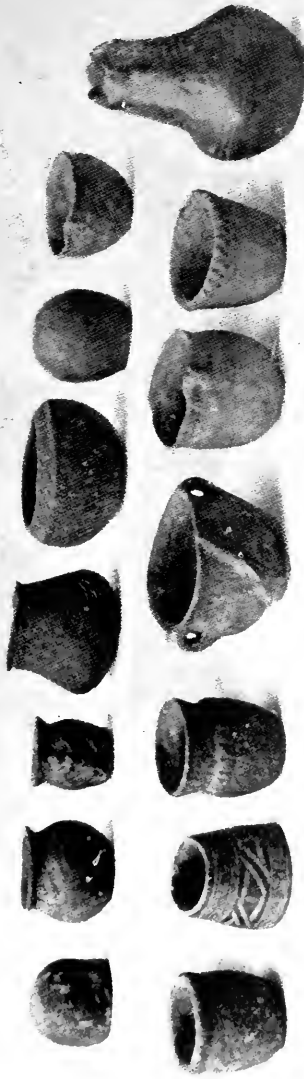
Joseph S. Lewis, of Philadelphia, a merchant, owned the island after the failure—purchasing it in Sept. 1817—and destruction of the house and property. It passed into the hands of George Neale, Sr., and is now possessed by his daughter Alice and son-in-law Amos W. Gordon. It is a pleasure resort during the Summer season. The old well is still in use, and some locust and other trees said to have been planted by Blennerhassett himself, over-shadow its moss-covered edges and its crystal waters that drop from the old oaken bucket. The caps of the stone gateway are shown in the steps of the present dwelling.

## PRIOR OCCUPATION



HIS romantic spot in American history was one of the camping and also burial grounds of the red man. It was certainly a hiding shelter for his canoes when on the war path. Behind have been left, brought to light by the abrasion of the Ohio's current, evidences of even pre-historic occupancy, as well as many relics that are plainly Indian in their origin and use. Arrow-heads, stone pipes, neck-lets, darts and numerous pieces of pottery have been secured, arranged and made to advance an ingenious theory of Prof. Henry Stahl, who has spent years of research and study, in this attractive field to prove that civilization has left evidences of its progress in the sands of the rivers, the mounds of higher levels, and the charred deposits of Indian camps everywhere.

The island, which is of glacial origin, extends east and west, is narrow in the middle and broad at both extremities. From the upper end a ridge of land begins and runs west about the center of the tract for over a mile, on both sides of this slight elevation are natural troughs, like abandoned canal



Mound Builders Pottery from Blennerhassett Island.



beds, with ridged banks higher than those bordering the river on either side. The channel bed on the north side of the western section of the island has been cut away by the current, leaving the ridge to become the river bank. Here near the center of the island, seems to have been placed by nature, or design of some prior race, a large shell heap. The deposit is over 1100 feet long, in width at upper end about three, and at lower 300 feet. The shells are of *Unio*. Amid these, as exposed by the water abrasion or plowing, or research, are found in great numbers, pottery whole and broken, chert-chips, bones of the deer and fragments of human skeletons, and a variety of stone implements. The shells of the land tortoise are quite numerous. In places ash-pits and gravel and clay are apparent. One of the skulls taken from the bank is now in the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. The pottery, much of it beautiful and elegant in design, and displaying a wonderful and surpassing originality, is of clay mixed with broken shells from the river. Porphyry implements highly polished were found, probably bark peelers. Pipes, circular stones, and arrow heads of fifteen different varieties were obtained by the thousand. The latter composed of gray, brown and black chert, chalcedony, and horn-stone. "As implements of attack are abundant it is probable they were fastened to arrows and used in shooting fish." Jasper drills

also were numerous. Instead of having been used to bore in stone, it is likely they were used to spear fish or in the chase and as hairpins—since the early tribes were careful of their long crownal locks. Tips of the horn of the deer, pendants and many other ornaments of beautiful workmanship of cannel coal, beads from bird bones, green stone polished hatchets, circular discs, grooved stone hatchets, bark peelers, bone needles and bone fish hooks, and cannel-coal eyelets, beads and copper bracelets, musical bone and stone flutes evidencing in their construction a taste for and knowledge of music, horn-hoe soil-diggers formed of the curved antlers of a stag, with bevelled sharp end, were among the numerous relics, some few of which were deposited in the Smithsonian Institute at the National Capital, but the rarest are in the Stahl collection.

The archoeological character of the island is of great importance and the vast number of industrial implements, whole and fragmentary pottery, the evident remains of numerous ancient workshops, group surrounding the various tribes and people heaps of flint clippings, shell heaps, the great number of skeletons, together with bones of animals, now extinct, as well as an abundance of the animal who dwell upon the same, show beyond a question that the island had been inhabited permanently for many certuries ere the white man's arrival.

Many articles found show great age, far be-



# From Blennerhassett Island.



*These are the pipes of the  
ancient Indians who lived  
on this island.*



Plain and Image Pipes With Stone Flute



yond that of the roving Indians who, ever since the boundary line they so much desired to preserve, to-wit, all territory west of the Ohio, was encroached upon, built no mounds, and for probably two hundred years all their dead were intrusives in the mounds built years before their arrival.

Hence the abrasion of currents of the spring flood brings to light the magnificent pottery and workmanship of the race who built the original mounds, as well as the "good enough" crude stone and bone relics of the Indian who last occupied this strategic point, when the game in abundance was forced to seek the water, and no enemy could appear without approaching under many disadvantages in fleets of canoes, which owing to the favorable posts of observation were never able to surprise the islanders.

The range of astonishing amount of relics recovered, the great difference in the artistic development of domestic implements, show that primitive man began here early, and the many mute witnesses of man's earliest attempts to supply himself with defensive and aggressive arms, demonstrate that the human family, step by step, produced the same result as the early races on the Nile, proving that if this country was ever settled by Europeans or Asiatic tribes the arrival upon the western continent took place in the earliest stage of indus-

trial development when even language was in its infancy.

We are pleased to offer our readers a few illustrations showing specimens from the island, collected and ingeniously arranged by our talented friend, Prof. Henry Stahl, of Parkersburg, who has divided thousands of specimens into the following four divisions:

1. Man in his earliest stage;
2. Man as a savage;
3. Man as a barbarian;
4. Man's first steps into civilization.

The articles found are classed into these four respective social stages, showing a continuous development from the first article fashioned by the hand of man down to the appearance of iron and steel.

From many of these ingeniously arranged and systemized groups, a few only have been selected. Few, if any richer fields for research and study of the prior races, can be found than Blennerhassett Island, so pregnant with memories of vanished years.

In the Stahl valuable relic collection is a sundial plate, found at the bottom of the old well of Blennerhassett. It is of dark purple slate, octagonal in shape, about half an inch thick and ten inches across. The face has its characters and lettering distinct, was made by J. Still, whose name is cut

in script upon the outer edge. The inscription is "G. Neil, 1812, latitude 54 degrees, 20 north.

There was found in the Blennerhassett mansion, in 1806, several drawings, which were preserved as late as 1846 in the family of a descendant of Commander Hugh Phelps. Among these was one of the head of a huge elk, designated "An Early Settler." Also, in oil, several indian heads, the work, doubtless, of Lady Blennerhassett and supposed to have been in portraiture of friendly Indians of prominence who frequented the barrister's grounds at that peace period. No one has been able, as yet, to identify or name the originals from whom taken. Copies of these are now preserved in an album by J. H. Dis DeBar, ex-Commissioner of Emigration for West Virginia, long a citizen of this county, but of late years resident in Philadelphia. Three of these portraits, on one canvas, cheek to jowl, indicate determined character, and if one was not in portraiture of the famed chief governing the river section, Kyashuta, who it is presumed was personally known to the island owners, in 1800, then no likeness of that hero who gave Washington a buffalo and so courteously treated him at Belleville in 1770, is extant.

## PRESENT OCCUPATION



It is more than probable the race usually called, for want of a better name, Mound-builders, were the first occupants of the island, it may have been thousands of years ago. Their presence on its wave washed sand is proved beyond question. By conquest or abandonment the Indian succeeded and enjoyed its beauty and isolation from inimical intrusion for many un-numbered moons and cycles. In the march of events the coming of the paler-tinted man drove him from the hunting grounds and the bark and pelt-tented villages to the Northwest and eventually toward the setting sun, and the absolute extermination that awaits the last of his race.

### RECORDED OWNERSHIP.

The island appears, from official records to have been claimed and the right, whether by military land warrant, hatchet title, or otherwise, undisputed, by Samuel McDowell, who assigns to John Harvie, and he to Henry Banks, who assigns to James Heron of Richmond, in trust, for the firm of Heron, Nelson & Co. The gifted Patrick Henry signs the deed. They on May 10, 1792,

convey for 250 pounds Virginia currency to Elijah Backus of Norwich, Conn. 269 and 297, equal 566 acres, by survey made May 17, 1784. (Page 97 B 7 of Wood County records.)

Backus, Jan. 28, 1799, contracts to sell to Harman Blennerhassett, for \$4,000, the upper section of the island, thus described: East and South bounded by waters of the Ohio, then by a line drawn across said island, at the "Narrows," as by Peregrine Foster and Silas Bent in their respective surveys for said Backus and Blennerhassett, made about March, 1798.

The property, after years, passes into the hands of George Neal, Jr., but not until Nov. 17, 1827, does he acquire full title, by deed from Hannah George (formerly Richards), late Hannah Backus, of Montgomery county, Ohio, relic of Elijah Backus, late of Randolph County, in the then territory of Illinois, deceased, conveying for \$300 her dower in the east end of the island (Deed Book 7, page 128.)

By the first county assessment, in 1801. Elijah Backus, then owner, was charged with tax of \$5.22 on 370 acres, at a valuation of \$1,100. He was also assessed with 228 1-2 acres, the "upper part of Belpre Island," \$3.30.

In Deed Book 4, page 3, is recorded conveyance from Elijah Backus, and wife Hannah, to Aaron Waldo Putnam, dated 24 April, 1807, for two tracts

of land on the two islands below the mouth of the Kanawha, for the consideration of \$1,903.50. It is thus described: Survey by Levi Barber of 141 acres in West or lower end of the first island; on East by lands sold by Backus to Harman Blennerhassett, beginning at a place called the "Narrows," and the other tract the whole of the island called "little island, or second isle South," being part of two tracts of land conveyed to Backus by James Heron of Richmond, Virginia, May 10, 1792, by that Court in that year.

In 1816 the assessment books show that Aaron Waldo Putnam owned the 141 2-10 acres, "lower part of Belpre island."

In 1820 appears 150 acres, part of Blennerhassett Island, "two miles S. W. from the Court House, assessed to Thomas Morris and Samuel Canby of Baltimore," formerly charged to Elijah Backus. So the earliest name of the middle appears to be "Backus" as stated upon old river navigation charts, and next "Belpre" from its facing that stockade-protected settlement—the colony there from Fort Harmar—and that the easterly and formerly the whole took the present name from the momentous events of later history.

Mrs. Amos W. Gordon and son Clifford now own the upper end of old Blennerhassett portion, of 105 acres, deriving her title from her father George Neale Jr. They reside thereon and culti-



vate the acreage, and the public resort to it from curiosity, by picnic excursions, and for base-ball games, coming by steam-launches, or by skiffs, sail-boats and the great steamers of the Ohio. It is an attractive spot to travellers, who pass the island up or down by palatial electric-lighted steamers, or view it from comfortable railroad coaches from the Virginia shore, and who are ever desirous to have pointed out the site of the vanished mansion, which like a gem, peeped a century ago, from its primitive and weird water-encircled setting in the wilderness. Some one in the centuries yet to come may have the means and sentimental inclination to restore the once hospitable edifice and its once beautiful dream like surrounding.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

From various sources gathered, the following items may have a local interest:

Blennerhassett got \$6,000 for onehalf the profits of his Marietta business, had \$3,000 stock in the firm, had \$6,000 in the hands of his Philadelphia agent. After building his mansion he had, outside of island property, five negroes and \$1,700 cash. He had \$9,000 in stock and profits, and \$10,000 on another account, and the amount in agent's hands, besides isle and negroes; property left by his father amounted to 20,000 pounds, equal to \$100,000. vested in British 3 per cent stock.

He gave power of attorney, 27 Nov., 1806, to

Samuel Hunt, of Gallia County, Ohio, and James Wilson, of Wood, to settle the firm affairs of Dudley Woodbridge, Jr., & Co. The firm began to operate 24th April, 1802. The records disclose that some of the men most active in the destruction of the home and property of the Blennerhassett member were those indebted to him financially, some of whom for years indulged and befriended and confided in. They were the first to believe him guilty and credit him with unpatriotic intentions and acts.

He had a store earlier than this of his own, as appears from the records of suits in Wood County. In October, 1800, he filed an account as follows:

Sylvester Lyons,

To Harman Blennerhassett, Dr.,

1798.

May 8th,	To 6½ of lining @ 75c-----	\$4.87
	To ½ gallon whiskey @ 50c-----	.50
May 24.	To 1 qt. whiskey @ 25c-----	.25
Aug. 29.	To ½ lb. Bohea tea @ 55c-----	.55
Aug. 29.	To 1 lb. raisons @ 33c-----	.88

1799.

April 13.	To sundries, delivered to John James as per order-----	10.85
April 19.	To fish hooks-----	.33
April 19.	To 1b. chocolate-----	.53
April 19.	To 180 bushels of corn-----	59.61

This account amounted to over a hundred dollars, and was tried by a jury on the 10th day of March, 1801, and a verdict rendered in behalf of the plaintiff.

In the County Court Feb. 2, 1807, in case of George Creel against Harman Blennerhassett, the entry reads; "On an attachment, the sheriff having returned executed on one negro man named Ranson Reed, and the defendant fails to reply, it is therefore considered by the court that the plaintiff recover against the defendant \$35.25 for his debt; also his costs in this behalf expended, and that the sheriff expose to sale the property aforesaid and render unto the said plaintiff his debt aforesaid, on the first Monday in April term next.

Ransom who was long the faithful waiter upon Mrs. Blennerhassett, and became the property of James M. Stephenson, an indulgent master, was a swarthy, dwarfish negro, a good fiddler, and a favorite with the youngsters of the vicinity, and many were the Virginia reels under his music and instruction, and when tired of the dance, the young listened to his wonderful stories of the stately queen now far away from her own isle of sorrow.

April 6, 1807, three commissioners were appointed to appraise the property in the hands of Sheriff Hugh Phelps, seized as that of Aaron Burr.

The sale bill of the Blennerhassett property,

Aug. 24, 1807, in case of Robert Miller against said defendant showed:

Accounts and notes, 34 in number-----	\$140.88
Stock, farm utensils, &c.-----	850.34½

---

Total-----\$991.22½

Which property the Court ordered returned to Blennerhassett, or the value thereof, on surrender by Nathaniel Cushing of the island rented by him, and he is directed to deliver up all at the expiration to Robert Miller or his attorney.

The entry Nov. 5, 1810, is:

Ichabod Griffin having heretofore been appointed to collect and deposit in the Bank of Marietta the money arising from the sales of certain property of Aaron Burr, and which was then in controversy between Robert Miller and the United States, but which has since terminated in favor of the United States; it is therefore ordered that the said Ichabod Griffin pay the money by him received as aforesaid to the Secretary of War, or to John G. Jackson, agent for the United States, or to his order.

The Monthly Court, 4 Feb., 1811, with Geo. D. Avery, Richard Neale, Bennett Cook and Robert Edelen, general justices, on the bench.

George Miller,  
vs.

Harman Blennerhassett and Robert Miller—In  
Chancery.

Ordered that Robert Miller be inhibited from paying, delivering or secreting any goods or chattels in his possession belonging to Harman Blennerhassett, &c.

The county court, 6 April, 1807, appointed Peter Anderson, William Weedon and Samuel Weld to appraise property seized by Col. Hugh Phelps, as the property of Aaron Burr. They made return schedules, 11th of April, 1807, of 25 barrels of whiskey—756 gallons—at an average value of 31 cents per gallon, \$273.41; 11 bbls. pork, \$361.41; 5 bbls. beef, \$30.00; other sundries, including two boats (\$60.25), making a total of \$1,056.38½. These articles were for the expedition from the Island to the South.

### SEIZURE OF FOUR BOATS BY BUELL.

Marietta, 2 Feb., 1807.

I certify that the four unfinished batteaux, late the property of Harman Blennerhassett, began to be built by Col. Jos. Barker, were seized by authority of the State of Ohio, by special warrant from the Governor's agent, and a return thereof

has been regularly made to the Secretary of War and to the governor of the State of Ohio.

JOS. BUELL, Maj. Gen.,  
3rd Division Mil., State Ohio.

John Clark, sheriff of the county of Washington, Ohio, makes the following return:

"I do hereby certify that on the 20th day of Feb., 1807, I served a writ of foreign attachment on Dudley Woodbridge, as garnishee of Harman Blennerhassett, attaching all lands, tenements, goods, rights and credits, moneys and effects which the said Blennerhassett might have in his, the said Woodbridge's hands or possession."

Among those who were upon the island when so much devastation occurred, were Major Robert Kincheloe, Matthias Chapman and Jacob Beeson, men of sterling worth and integrity, education and probity. The character of these citizens was such as in part to controvert insinuations so often made that the militia of the county were guilty of rudeness and incivility to the Blennerhassett hostess and family.

One of the pioneer natives of the county, beyond four score years of age (now dead about ten years), Mrs. Clementine (Saunders) Neale, stated that these officers of the command in later years, who were eye witnesses of the event, assured her that so far from Mrs. Blennerhassett being insulted or rudely annoyed, as has been so repeatedly alleged,

she was courteously addressed, that the Major asked an interview, and she came out from her room for a few minutes and treated him with much hauteur, and was herself answered with mildness, but firmly. The Major was a most kindly and genial gentleman, as were the others named, and incapable of any breaches in this regard.

There was a pier at the landing whence the flotilla embarked on that Memorable December night, the steps to which were of stone, but till recently could not be located. For many years interested parties had been searching at times for these steps which led down to the stream and were known to exist somewhere upon the shores of the island. Lew Shaefer, during the summer of 1894, in wandering about the supposed vicinity, came upon a nicely dressed stone, one end of which protruded above the earth. Upon excavating he discovered the old stone steps, built nearly a century ago by the barister-farmer, Blennerhassett. They are about seventy-five yards below the present landing, and appeared only recently to be yet firmly joined by the cement originally brought from the old country.

George Simms, of Hockingport, Ohio, has an old kettle which once belonged to Blennerhassett.

Israel Waldo Putnam, of Rockland, the vicinity of the site of Farmer's Castle, in Ohio, has an old settce given his grandmother by Mrs. Blenner-

hassett, after she left the island and for kindness bestowed on her by the grandmother and family. It is made of wild cherry, then abundant in the woods, is six feet long, three feet high and fifteen inches wide, with waved slats, three inches wide, of solid wood, and is highly prized. With it, received in a similar way, he owns a small table of black walnut, native to the island farm. He has also two glass plates, with figures of leaves and vine, with gold leaf, given to his oldest sister. One of the plates is in the hands of Dr. Curtis, of Marietta. Descendant Putnam has also the old parchment deed executed and signed by Patrick Henry to Alexander Nelson, in trust for Nelson, Heron & Co., assignee of Henry Banks, dated 16 May, 1786, for 269 acres, by survey dated 17 May, 1784, by virtue of Treasury Warrant No. 5,851, issued 5 July, 1780, for second island below mouth of Little Kanawha river, in the county of Monongalia." This description would indicate that the island is a combination by gradual fills and freshets of several insular tracts.

George Alfred Townsend, the famous correspondent "Gath," owns a set of Blennerhassett, old style, blue back, split-bottomed chairs, bought of Miss Ellenwood.

There is still preserved in front of the tenement upon the island several blocks of dressed stone, which were portions of the pillars at each side of



the landing. Nearby the original location of these shafts are tall sycamore trees, across the straight and almost limbless trunks of which are numerous slats nailed to serve as rests for wild duck snares of the bird hunters. The bank has crumbled away from the "Narrows." There exists a huge sycamore tree still, which started from the cellar of the mansion soon after its destruction, and must be 104 years old. The same well and a locust tree nearby will cause one to imagine the years of a century to have been rolled backward, and Blennerhassett to be enjoying the cool waters of the one and the shade of the other as he leans slightly in his chair at evening or sultry noon, and meditates upon the loveliness of his island home and the quietude and inspiration of peace ere the spoiler came.

Quite a number of Blennerhassett relics and souvenirs are in the families of the citizens of Marietta. The college has some in the Fearing collection.

Dr. B. F. Harte has a sofa, once the property of D. C. Skinner; Miss Mary L. Skinner owns several handsome knife cases; Mrs. J. D. Cadwallader has a folding garden chair, which from Blennerhassett passed into possession of Dudley Woodbridge; Mrs. Frich of Fifth street has a table; and the government order for the arrest of Blenner-

hassett belongs to Mrs. M. N. Buell, of Fifth street, Marietta.

In the relic room of the "Woman's Centennial Association" in Marietta, are:

1. A fruit dish, presented by Mrs. Goodno, of Belpre;

2. A silk fan, given to Miss Rowena Spencer, of Vienna, who afterward became Mrs. Arius Nye, by Lady Blennerhassett herself, afterwards the property of Mrs. Shelton Sturgis, of Chicago, then of her daughter, Mrs. E. H. Brush, of Chicago, who presented it to the relic room;

3. A parlör chair, white and gilt, cane-seated, presented by Sarah (Norton or) Gaston, of Har-mar;

4. Part of some chintz bed-hangings, presented by Mrs. Mary Starr, of Marietta;

5. An old iron tea-kettle, presented by Miss Ellenwood, of Belpre, O.

W. Park Andrews, as heir of the Mayberrys, has the following relics of the mansion; 2 large platters or waiters of sheetiron; 6 stem goblets of cut-glass for wine; 2 of smaller size; 2 decanters; 1 small, old fashioned, washstand, with hole in top for basin. The descendant of James G. Laidley—Alex. Thomas Laidley, of Charleston, West Virginia, till death owned a snuff box given by Blennerhassett to his friend, in 1805, before the conspiracy culminated. It now is stored by the State

Historical Society. Amos Gordon has his dresser, to be seen in his home on the head of the island. He claims the old house was two stories and the wings two, but the circular approaches only one. The wine cellar portion alone was dug out.

The miniatures from which photos were copied and the engravings of the Blennerhassetts in this volume produced, were taken in Europe in 1795, ere debarkation for the new world of America. The Mississippi plantation to which the unfortunate barrister fled, when driven from his cherished island, in view of the shelter it afforded and promised, was called "La Cashe," the hiding place.

In May, 1895, a Spanish silver coin, bearing the date 1772, was found near the spot where previously had been dug up a number of pieces of Indian pottery, which bore curiously carved figures thereon.

The old floating mill, which by the action of the current ground the golden maize of the early settlers, was on the Virginia side, away from the present channel. The old miller, it is traditionally stated, was killed by the Indians and buried on the Ohio side of the river.

The county court of Wood, once authorized its clerk, John Stokeley, to erect a dam over the south channel of the Ohio river from the Virginia shore to the island, for the purpose of constructing and running a grist mill, but the enterprise was never

carried out. A wing dam, to deepen the channel for steamer navigation, has been constructed there to throw the volume of water pressing on the south shore in the great bend to the north side of the island.

Several of the young men from Belpre, six or more; returned in the spring from the Mississippi territory. Two others, Charles and John Dana, remained, and settling near Walnut Hills, purchased land and cultivated cotton.

Burr, soon after his recognizance, in January, 1807, requested John Dana, with twenty others, to take him in a skiff to a point twenty miles above Bayou Pierre, and land him in the night, intending to escape across the country by land. In order to better conceal his identity; before starting he exchanged his broadcloth coat and beaver hat with Dana for his coarser dress of a boatman, and an old white wool hat.

One of Blennerhassett's attempts in chemistry was to convert beef into adipocere, or waxy fatness, by immersing large pieces of it in the still water of the beautiful cove between the landing and the sand bar at the head of the island. He fancied it might be used for illuminating, but the cat fish and perch so interfered with his experiments that he never perfected the chemical change.

Charles Fenton Mercer, who was on the island

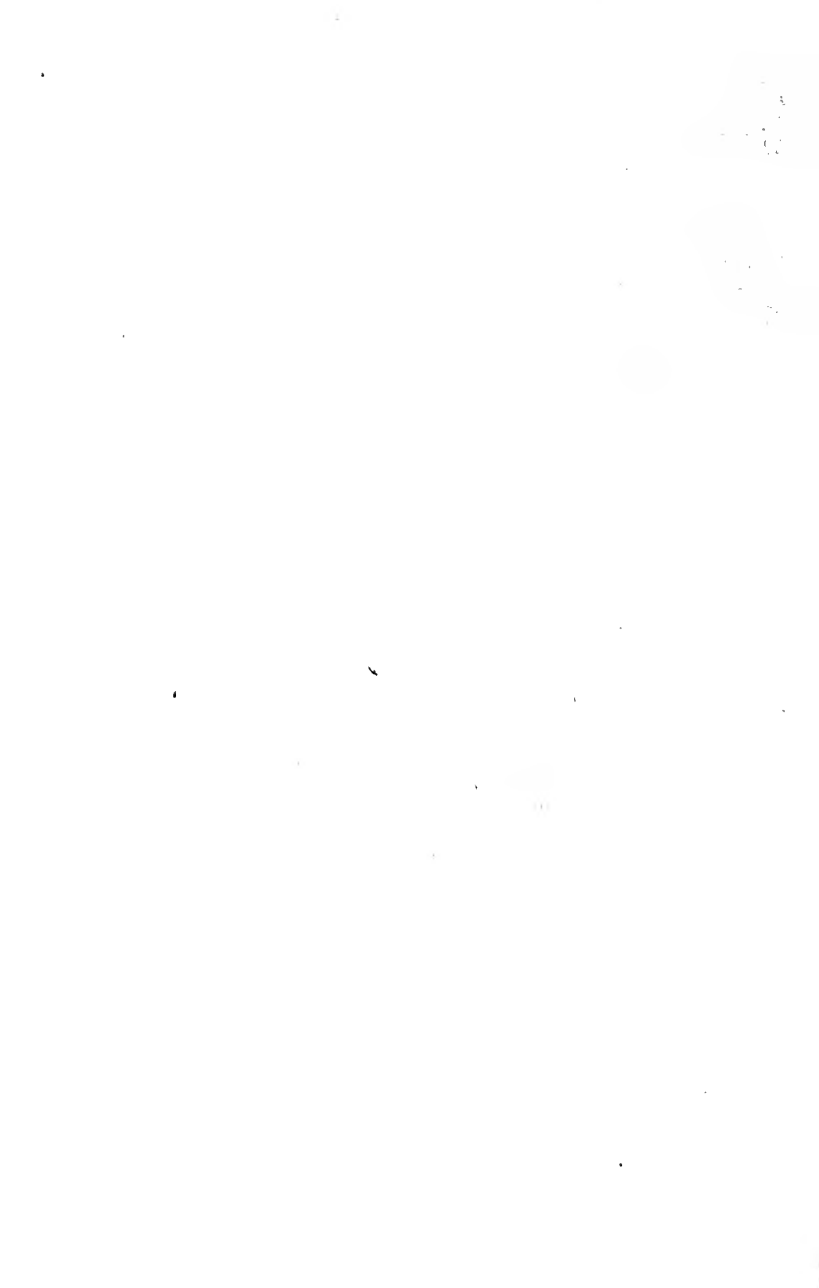
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in November, 1806, made a full statement, soon after the Richmond trial, giving his opinion of the object of the expedition, in which he clears Blennerhassett of any designs against the peace and quiet of the United States.



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